

de Belgique, the Belgian authorities have achieved a further step towards cultural autonomy of the Flemish and French-speaking parts of the kingdom—following upon the creation of the Flemish University at Ghent soon after the Great War. For the present, each of the three classes of the new Flemish institution will consist of ten members appointed by royal decree. Further members will be co-opted, the total number being confined to twenty per class.

THE original members are: *Sciences*: J. De Smedt, A. Dumon, W. Robyns, G. Verriest (all of the University of Louvain); J. Gillis, J. Meuwissen, A. Schoep, H. L. Vanderlinden, A. J. J. Vandeveld (all of the University of Ghent); H. Schouteden (director of the Congo Museum); *Letters, etc.*: P. Bellefroid (University of Nymegen), E. De Bruyne, H. J. De Vleeschauwer (both of the University of Ghent), E. Van Dievoet (University of Louvain), H. de Man and R. Victor (both of the University of Brussels), J. Denucé, C. Huysmans, F. Prims and F. Van Cauwelaert (all of Antwerp); *Fine Arts*: P. Gilson, L. Mortelmans, J. Van Nuffel, composers; C. Permeke, A. Servaes, W. Vaes, painters; H. Vandeveld, architect; E. Wynants, sculptor; S. Leurs, University of Ghent; R. Maere, University of Louvain. Provisionally, Messrs. Van Cauwelaert and Schoep will act respectively as president and secretary of the Academy, the full title of which is "Koninklijke Vlaamsche Academie voor Wetenschappen, Letteren en Schoone Kunsten van België".

Control of Nickel Distribution

IN a valuable paper on "The Control of War Metals as a Peace Measure", by F. E. Lathe and S. J. Cook, of the National Research Laboratories, Ottawa, the view is expressed that, although Canada produces more than 80 per cent of the world's output of nickel, control of distribution would not be a simple matter because only about 20 per cent of the annual production is used for war purposes, and the metal frequently passes through several hands before reaching the ultimate consumer. The calculations are based on 1934 figures, but the estimates are believed to be still substantially correct. The pamphlet has been forwarded to NATURE by way of comment on a suggestion made in the course of an article on "Science and a World Foundation" published in our issue of August 6, p. 227. Two further possibilities must be borne in mind. Reserves of the metal could be readily accumulated by the Government of a country which anticipated war; and, in the event of shortage, no effort would be spared to discover substitutes for essential metals. For an extended war, however, extremely large stocks would be required of such metals as iron and steel, copper, zinc and lead. The aim, therefore, should be to introduce restrictions of a temporary or unexpected character. But the only real hope of effective restriction lies in international action, and it would be most effective in the case of tin, antimony, nickel, copper and iron. This conclusion adds point to the proposal that scientific

workers of all nations should, as a group, combine with other groups to give what help they can in promoting the evolution of a World State, capable when necessary of exercising suitable control over the distribution of such commodities.

Smoke-like Swarms of the Harlequin Fly

REFERRING to the letter from Mr. A. S. E. Ackermann entitled "A Curious Atmospheric Phenomenon", in NATURE of September 10, several correspondents suggest that the curious grey columns described by him were due to swarms of *Chironomus*, the Harlequin fly. Swarms of these insects dance about in the air at evening time and are commonly called "gnats", to which they have considerable resemblance, though they differ from them in being entirely harmless. They often appear in columns on a calm evening and the columns may break up and re-form with a wavy motion. Capt. C. J. P. Cave writes: "I once saw a number of such columns on a very still evening in Lombardy. At first I took them to be very small narrow pillars of smoke from burning weeds, but a closer view showed them to be swarms of gnats. The whole description given by Mr. Ackermann tallies with my recollection of the phenomenon."

National Museum of Southern Rhodesia

DR. G. ARNOLD, director of the National Museum of Southern Rhodesia, Bulawayo, writes to point out that some confusion would appear to have arisen in reference to the proposal to establish a museum for Zimbabwe, reported incorrectly to be intended as a 'National' museum (see NATURE, July 9, p. 65). The proposed museum, Dr. Arnold states, is to be a small one-roomed building, in which will be exhibited some of the original antiquities which have been found in that neighbourhood, and also plaster casts of finds which are now the property of the British Museum and of other museums in Southern Rhodesia and Cape Town. The National Museum of Southern Rhodesia, already in existence at Bulawayo, was formerly the Rhodesian Museum, which was founded in 1901 by the Rhodesia Scientific Association and the Rhodesia Chamber of Mines jointly. From 1902 the Government of Southern Rhodesia contributed to maintenance an annual grant equal in amount to the subscriptions guaranteed by the founding bodies and an annual contribution from the Bulawayo Municipality; but in 1936 the Government, acting on a recommendation made by the Museums Commission, of which Sir Henry Miers was chairman, took over the Museum under an Act of Parliament of Southern Rhodesia, and constituted it the National Museum of Southern Rhodesia. The control is vested in a Board of Trustees appointed by the Governor. It includes departments of zoology, entomology, geology, and ethnology, prehistory and national history. Under the provisions of the Act, the Board is also empowered, subject to the approval of the Governor, to acquire by agreement any existing museum in the Colony, and also, if directed by the Governor, to establish and maintain any new museum in the Colony. The number of visitors in the first year

under the Board of Trustees was 24,585, excluding natives, and in the year ending December 31, 1937, 23,501.

The Carnegie United Kingdom Trust

So all-pervasive are the Trust's activities that its annual report (Twenty-fourth Annual Report, January-December 1937, approved by the Trustees at their General Meeting held on Friday, March 4, 1938. Pp. vi+92+2 plates. Dunfermline: Carnegie United Kingdom Trust) is almost equivalent to an index to all organized voluntary effort toward social amelioration. It is noteworthy that a very large proportion of the enterprises favoured by the Trust are concerned with rural life: land settlement, rural community councils, village halls, survey of Scottish villages, local history records, schools for rural music conductors, young farmers' clubs, women's institutes, youth hostels, Y.M.C.A. farm-training scheme, village colleges, women's rural institutes' handicrafts scheme. Land settlement schemes, for which the Trust allocated £150,000 for the period 1936-40, progressed steadily last year. The Land Settlement Association now controls twenty-five estates in fifteen English counties, comprising 11,000 acres and providing, when fully developed, small-holdings for 7,000 persons, all taken from distressed areas. The settlers who are definitely established are happy in their surroundings and are mixing more and more with the old inhabitants of neighbouring villages, and the general health, especially of the children, has shown notable improvement. The Association is, however, finding it difficult to induce local authorities to make use of the powers vested in them. For many years, the Trust has fostered the development of agencies for caring for the welfare of boys and girls over fourteen years of age. Among these are the National Association of Boys' Clubs and the National Council of Girls' Clubs, which are in receipt of subsidies from the Trust amounting to £25,000 for the current quinquennium. Valuable as the work of these clubs undoubtedly is, it is very small in volume when compared with the corresponding activities in Germany and Italy.

The Agricultural Research Council

FARMERS and others interested in agriculture have sometimes expressed the view that insufficient information is available about the activities of the Agricultural Research Council. To meet what it recognizes as an important need, the Council has issued a booklet entitled "Constitution and Functions of the Agricultural Research Council", copies of which can now be obtained on written application to the Secretary at 6a, Dean's Yard, Westminster, S.W.1. The Council, which was established by Royal Charter in 1931, is responsible for tendering advice to the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, the Department of Agriculture for Scotland and the Development Commissioners as to the expenditure on agricultural research of State funds amounting to more than four hundred thousand pounds yearly. It is also charged with the scientific supervision of subsidized agricultural research, and, in addition, it has research

officers engaged in the investigation of particular problems. A recent development has been the acquisition of an estate at Compton in Berkshire for use as a field station. Here problems such as those involved in certain diseases of animals will be investigated on a field scale, when the necessary laboratory experiments have been carried out at the research institutes, and a supply of animals, which have been raised in isolation and are free from disease, will be kept available for the workers at these institutes. In addition to advising on research in progress, the Council plans and co-ordinates such immediate extensions of the research programme as seem necessary to secure a more intensive attack on problems of special urgency, particularly in the field of animal and plant diseases.

Nomenclature in Electrical Engineering

THE development of electrical science and its applications during the last century has led to the introduction of a host of names, units and definitions, many of them now household words. The history of these words, and of others which have been introduced, only to be discarded, is of considerable interest, and recalls the difficulties the pioneers experienced in explaining clearly new facts and phenomena. Though many terms go back to Greek science and to the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the majority belong to the last century and the days since Faraday. The subject is an intricate one and it has not, we believe, been dealt with before so fully as by Prof. G. W. O. Howe, in a paper entitled "The Concepts and Language of Electrical Engineering" read to the Association of Engineers at Calcutta, and printed in the *Engineer* of September 2. In coining the words anode, cathode, ions, electrodes and others, Faraday was assisted by Dr. Whewell of Cambridge, whose encyclopædic knowledge led someone to write, "You may roam where you will through the realm of infinity, and find nothing so great as the Master of Trinity". Whewell had proposed the terms inductricity and inducteous, which fortunately, like the mac, bob, tom and dick of Heaviside, were not adopted. Prof. Howe does justice to the various individuals who have devoted their attention to the matter of units, as well as to the committees and congresses which have assisted in standardizing them.

Indian Forest Research

THE value of forestry research work in its direct bearing upon other Government departments and industry is admirably portrayed in a publication entitled "Forest Research and Indian Industry", issued by the Government of India Press, New Delhi. Experts are maintained at the Forestry Research Institute at Dehra Dun to undertake research work in silviculture, botany, mycology, forest protection, entomology, biochemistry, forest utilization, wood technology, timber seasoning, preservation and testing of timbers, wood-working and minor forest products including paper pulp. The work of these experts often interlocks, as becomes evident from a perusal of this very informative publication. Illustrative of some of the