

attention to the mangroves. A party consisting of Dr. Thomas, Mr. Philipson and Mr. Sporne is going to spend a month in the rain forest where each will carry out research on his own problems: Dr. Thomas working on the Pteridophyta, Mr. Philipson collecting, because he is one of those appointed to complete the late Dr. Rendlo's "Flora of Jamaica", and Mr. Sporne investigating flower morphology. The whole expedition will return at the beginning of October with the exception of Mr. Philipson, who will stay on for a few more months.

#### Earthquake on the Gold Coast

EARTH tremors shook the whole district of the Gold Coast, Ashanti, Dahomey and Western Nigeria in West Africa from about 7.10 p.m. on June 22 to 4 a.m. on June 23. It is not yet clear whether there were several shocks of approximately equal dimensions from one or several closely situated epicentres, or whether there was one large earthquake with precursors and aftershocks. With the evidence available at the moment, the latter appears to be the most probable as the greatest impact of the earthquake was felt at Accra (5° 30' N., 0° 10' W.), Cape Coast (5° 5' N., 1° 0' W.), and Sekondi (4° 53' N., 1° 48' W.) at 7.15 p.m. on June 22. If the intensity of the shock was the same at each of these three places, as the immediately available evidence seems to indicate, then the epicentre was near 5° N., 1° W. and the focus rather below normal, or it was, say, 3.5° N., 1° W. in the Gulf of Guinea and depth of focus normal. Further evidence from the area, but more particularly the evidence of seismograms, will decide this. Many public buildings, banks, offices and native houses in the area have been damaged or destroyed, killing seventeen people at Accra, twenty-nine at Cape Coast and twenty at Sekondi, besides injuring several others. At Accra the electric lighting system was interrupted, but this was quickly remedied. An earthquake of these dimensions is an exceptionally rare occurrence, if not unknown, near Accra, and according to recent catalogues of epicentres there is no active epicentre anywhere near the present one. It is unfortunate that there are no seismographs situated nearer the probable epicentre than Algiers, Johannesburg, Cape Town and Nairobi, though the shock appears to have been sufficiently intense to have been registered at these, and by seismographs at even greater epicentral distances.

#### Entomological Control of Lantana

THE rapid spread of Lantana, a garden escape, in Northern Queensland has brought it amongst the serious weed pests for which the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, Australia, is seeking methods of control. In 1935 studies of *Teleonemia lantanae* were commenced in Fiji, where this bug had been introduced from Mexico, its native home, by way of Hawaii. As it proved harmless to any Australian plants of economic importance, it was established under quarantine conditions in Canberra in 1936. The first liberations were made late in that year in

the Northern Rivers area of New South Wales, and afterwards near Atherton in Queensland, and at Rockhampton. Disappointment followed; the bugs seemed to have disappeared, until in April of this year they were reported in the Atherton district in enormous numbers over an area of some twenty-four acres. Leaves were falling from the Lantana bushes, flowers had been destroyed and in some instances up to two feet of the ends of branches had been killed as the result of the bug feeding on them. At Rockhampton also there are signs of establishment. Undue optimism is to be deprecated, and it is unlikely that similar success will be attained to that of *Cactoblastis* on prickly pear. It still remains to be seen whether *Teleonemia* can maintain itself in large numbers and whether continuous defoliation will destroy Lantana; nevertheless, the outlook is promising.

#### Exhibition of New Textile Fibres

AN exhibition of new textile fibres has been arranged at the Science Museum, South Kensington, and will be opened on July 3 for two months. To-day fibres possessing many of the properties of natural wool are manufactured from skimmed milk. The exhibit illustrating the stages in the manufacture of casein yarn includes several examples of fabrics, woven on worsted machinery. Another group of exhibits includes yarns and materials as produced by the viscose and cellulose acetate methods. These are generally termed rayon or 'artificial silk'. By modification of the spinning processes it is now possible to manufacture exceptionally strong yarns of this material, and some of the applications are illustrated by such articles as a section of a motor tyre showing the cord reinforcement, 'doped' aeroplane fabric, fine gauge hose, sail cloth, etc. An interesting American exhibit shows a new type of cellulose acetate rayon in which the fibre is characterized by an inherent stabilized crimp, producing a yarn the behaviour of which is comparable in some respects to that of wool. One of the most important textile discoveries of recent times has been that of nylon. This is a truly synthetic yarn and is the first textile fibre prepared wholly of raw materials from the mineral kingdom. Although derived from coal, air and water, nylon can be produced in filaments of exceptional strength or as fine as a spider's web, yet having elasticity and lustre. Another striking development is to be found in the use of glass fibres. Objects showing this class of fibre include woven and knitted fabrics made entirely of pure glass with a collection of articles indicating the commercial applications. An exhibit of interest from Tokyo shows fibre and yarn produced from seaweed. Jute, sisal, and hemp are each represented, with examples of the latest types of yarns and materials produced from these fibres.

#### British Museum (Natural History): Acquisitions

RECENT acquisitions in the Department of Zoology include a collection of Northern Rhodesian mounted heads and skulls of ungulates made chiefly at Mpika