

agriculture. He is returning to the scene of his early labours, for in 1905 he was mycologist to the West Indian Department of Agriculture. Afterwards he served as assistant director of science and agriculture in British Guiana, and as director of agriculture in Mauritius and in Ceylon. He held the latter post until 1929, when the then Colonial Secretary, Mr. Ormsby Gore, selected him as agricultural adviser to strengthen the liaison between the rapidly developing scientific branches of colonial agriculture and the administration in Whitehall. He fulfilled this function brilliantly, and the very active interest now shown by the Colonial Office in promoting scientific agriculture in the territories under its jurisdiction is largely a consequence of his work. He was knighted in 1937.

Much of Sir Frank's time was spent in studying agriculture in the Colonies themselves, very few of which he has not visited. His reports on these visits are admirable, if summary, examples of the conditions and problems confronting colonial agriculturists. Of recent years his special interests have been agricultural co-operation and soil conservation—two matters which happen to be of vital importance to the restoration of prosperity in the West Indies. The post of Comptroller for Development and Welfare has been instituted on the recommendation of the West India Royal Commission 1938–39, which recommended the establishment of a West Indian Welfare Fund financed by an annual grant of £1,000,000 to be administered by a comptroller with wide powers of discretion. The post is the keystone of the programme of social reform and rehabilitation recommended by the Commission. Sir Frank Stockdale is succeeded at the Colonial Office by Dr. H. A. Tempany, who has had long experience of colonial agriculture in the West Indies, Mauritius and Malaya. He has held the post of assistant agricultural adviser to the Colonial Secretary since 1936.

Supplies of Vitamin C

STATEMENTS have recently appeared in the German scientific press to the effect that German men of science have discovered that the hips of the wild rose are a rich source of the antiscorbutic vitamin C, and that the German State railways have arranged to grow wild roses along the tracks. It is said that half a million plants are to be acquired for this purpose alone, and that other waste lands are to be used in the same way. Actually the discovery that hips are so active is not a new one. It was one of the various materials found to be unexpectedly potent as the result of the introduction of a chemical method of testing for vitamin C. This method was worked out largely in Great Britain. Another fruit found to be unexpectedly active was the blackcurrant. The latter is at least eight times as potent as orange juice or lemon juice, and dried hips about thirty times.

For some years past, hips have been used as a raw material for vitamin C, not only in Germany, but also in parts of Scandinavia and in the U.S.S.R. In

the latter country pine needles have likewise been worked up on an enormous scale to provide vitamin C in the northern regions where scurvy has been rife in the winter months. A dried preparation of rose hips has been available commercially for some time in Great Britain. It has the disadvantage of a somewhat fibrous consistency; and while synthetic vitamin C is so cheap, it seems doubtful if the labour of collecting and extracting the vitamin from wild hips would be worth while here in England. With our plentiful supplies of potatoes, we need fear no shortage of vitamin C, even in a long war.

Archæology During and After the War

MR. A. W. CLAPHAM in his presidential address to the Society of Antiquaries of London, of which the text is now available in full (*Antiq. J.*, 20, 3, July 1940), raised two points of current interest. He deplored that several archæological excavations had suffered untimely interruption on the cessation of field work on the outbreak of war, and also expressed the alarm which he felt in common with all interested in archæological studies at the way in which military exigencies are endangering or causing the disappearance of earthworks, barrows and other monuments of antiquity. While the Society is exercising such vigilance as is possible in the circumstances, Mr. Clapham feared that little could be done except complete a record, before the threatened relics vanished for ever. The action of the Society in urging upon the Colonial Office that steps be taken for the protection of the antiquities of the Hadramaut, of which Miss G. Caton-Thompson had given an account, has as yet produced no result. Dr. R. E. Mortimer Wheeler, however, has been fortunate enough to be able to complete the work in Brittany begun in 1938, although further investigations had to be abandoned when work ceased abruptly in August 1939.

Turning to the question of archæological investigations in a post-War future, Mr. Clapham, however regretfully it is admitted, was fully justified in predicting a much restricted activity in which the large-scale excavations of past years will not be possible. The heavy expenditure involved will place such undertakings beyond the bounds of possibility. He was the less inclined to deplore this outcome of the War on the ground that in the field of British archæology the major problems of the prehistoric periods had been resolved and future work might well be confined to filling in details and closing gaps in archæological knowledge. Of one period, however, he made an exception and pointed to the Dark Ages as a field still almost wholly unexplored. In the work of conservation, also, which he regarded as an important sphere of activity for the post-War archæologist, he stressed the importance of the much-neglected study of carved stones and architectural features and their care as well as their display. In going on to discuss the possibility of the formation of a national museum of British sculpture he raised, as he showed himself to be aware, a question which is as difficult as it is urgent.