

and Holland; but the problem is far more difficult in the British Isles. The report also contains further details of the inquiry into status of the wildfowl of Europe.

### Museum Techniques

SEVERAL interesting papers are contained in the April issue of *Conservation* (1, No. 3; 1954), the journal of the International Institute for the Conservation of Museum Objects. Mr. W. G. Constable reviews the whole basis of conservation, especially in relation to problems of responsibility and general administration, and deals with the tasks of a curator as distinct from a conservator. An article on the Coronation Chair in Westminster Abbey proves that there have been two distinct decorative treatments, the first one consisting of paint and being in all probability Walter's original scheme. This was replaced at some undocumented date by a second one, richer and more elaborate, transforming the chair into a gilded throne. The radiographs also show the crude repairs of earlier times carried out with nails or screws. Prof. F. C. Thompson and Dr. A. K. Chatterjee write concerning the age-embrittlement of silver coins, and the issue closes with some useful reviews. Curators who also—and indeed should—deal with conservation will find much of interest and help in this new and worth-while publication.

### University of London Appointments Board : Report for 1953

THE forty-third annual report of the Appointments Board of the University of London, which covers the year ended December 31, 1953, notes specially, first a decrease in the number of registrations of men in the age-group 21–25 years (probably due to the increasing number who elect for National Service after taking their degree), and second, the doubling of the number of appointments secured by women graduates. Fewer teaching vacancies were notified to the Board; but there is no evidence to support the thesis that an increase in the number of graduates will alleviate the shortage of good teachers in scientific subjects. Although a number of good biologists on the Register are seeking a career in research or scientific work generally with no great prospects of suitable posts, they are unwilling to consider school teaching, although the vacancies are not unattractive. In previous years the greatest demand was for chemists; but during 1953 the main pressure was for engineers, chiefly those with mechanical and electrical training. There is a shortage of civil engineers for municipal work, and the Civil Service still attracts a substantial proportion of the best scientific workers and engineers. Of 617 men and women placed in full-time posts during the year, only four took science teaching posts in secondary schools, twenty taking university appointments, fourteen technical college appointments and twelve full-time tutorships. The Register at December 31, 1953, included 957 names compared with 1,042 on December 31, 1952; of these, 36 held an engineering degree, 50 general degrees in science, and 128 other degrees in science (biology, 39; chemistry, 31; mathematics, 33; and physics, 19).

### United States National Museum : Annual Report for 1952–53

THE annual report of the United States National Museum, under the direction of the Smithsonian

Institution (pp. vii+98. Washington, D.C. : Government Printing Office, 1953), always provides stimulating and impressive reading, and that for 1953 is no exception. Starting with the recognized two-fold function of a museum to preserve objects for posterity and to enlarge the scope of human knowledge by a critical study of the collections, it continues with the outline of a scheme to modernize the exhibits. The Museum is really three museums in one: a natural history museum dealing with plants, animals and minerals; a museum of anthropology dealing with ancient and modern man and his works; and a museum of national history and technology. The present policy is to interpret this three-fold aspect in a broad, integrated panorama of life. The report then details some of the exhibition work which has already been accomplished towards this lofty goal. A most impressive part of the report is an account of the investigations and researches carried out by individual members of the staff—a clear indication that they have not allowed the factual minutiae of day-by-day work to dull their imaginations. A total of more than a hundred and fifty papers were published during the year.

### Lundy Field Society

THE seventh annual report of the Lundy Field Society describes the year's working as one of consolidation. Much of the work on the non-avian fauna and the flora of Lundy was made up of contributions towards long-term surveys which are not yet complete enough for report. One paper, however, by M. T. Delany, describes his observations on the habitats of the bristle-tail, *Petrobius maritimus*. Within the limits of Lundy, the distributional range of this insect is wide. Providing rocks are available, whether they be slate or granite, capable of offering the appropriate cover, populations of *Petrobius* will survive. The factors, and their differential effects, responsible for the maintenance of the population balance of *Petrobius* in various localities have still to be determined. The other paper describes the observations of A. L. Galliford on the freshwater localities of Lundy; he now reports on the minute waterfleas and wheel animalcules. The report also includes a short summary on the domesticated and semi-domesticated stock which adorn the island.

### British Weed Control Conference at Harrogate

THE British Weed Control Conference will be held this year during November 2–4, at the Majestic Hotel, Harrogate, under the presidency of Sir James A. Scott Watson, chief scientific and agricultural adviser to the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries. The Conference is being organized by the British Weed Control Council, which is composed of representatives from the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, the Department of Agriculture for Scotland, the Ministry of Agriculture for Northern Ireland, the Agricultural Research Council, the Colonial Office, the Association of British Insecticide Manufacturers, the British Agricultural Contractors Association, the National Association of Corn and Agricultural Merchants and the National Farmers Union. The formal papers will cover the present position of herbicides in British agriculture; cultivation and weed control; chemical weed control in the United States with special reference to horticulture; rotation of weed killers; spraying machinery; economics of commercial applications; legal aspects of spray damage; weed persistence and