

Scottish Office. The report, prepared by Lieut.-Commr. G. H. Hughes-Onslow, Barr, and Mr. T. Smith, Maybole, recommended that protection be given to guillemots, razor-bills, puffins, kittiwake gulls, and oyster catchers, and also to black guillemots, stormy petrels and fulmar petrels, which have been observed in pairs on the Craig but have not yet nested there, although they have nested on the neighbouring mainland. Protection was not recommended for solan geese or gannets, the stock of which is sufficiently large, nor for the greater black-backed gulls, lesser black-backed gulls, herring gulls, and cormorants, which are so numerous all around our coasts and so destructive to fish and other life as not to merit protection. Regarding the practice of shooting birds from boats, the reporters agreed with the Secretary of State for Scotland that prohibition could not be enforced. The practice, however, should be discouraged. The comparatively few eggs collected by the tenants on the island has no effect on the bird life. The report was adopted for submission to the Scottish Office.

#### Peterhead Sealers and Whalers

IN the January-February number of the *Scottish Naturalist*, No. 199, 1933, Dr. Robert W. Gray continues his very interesting account of "Peterhead Sealers and Whalers: A Contribution to the History of the Whaling Industry", begun in 1932 (September-October). Peterhead first sent a whaling vessel to the Greenland Sea (the "Greenland" of the old sealers and whalers, the Spitsbergen Sea, the ocean between Greenland and Spitsbergen) in 1788, and a Greenland whaling ship sailed out of Peterhead for the last time in 1893. Dr. Gray, whose grandfather and father both commanded whaling ships, possesses original log-books containing a large amount of reliable information as to the whaling in the latter portion of this period and has gathered together data from many sources relating to the earlier years, beginning with the tiny *Robert*, the pioneer vessel. Up to the year 1814 the fishery had been pursued generally in the more northerly regions, but after this the boats began to explore southwards. From 1825 the Peterhead ships went mostly to the Davis Straits and the whales of the Greenland sea were left alone for a time. In 1837 the whalers returned to the north and both northern and southern fishing was continued, the northern fishery in some years proving very successful. A great deal is to be learned by reading this article, the present portion going up to the year 1874. In that year, according to the log-book of the *Eclipse* it was an open season, northerly winds prevailed in April, May and June, there was a strong south-westerly drift and the edge of the ice lay far west. The ice was drifting south at the rate of twenty to thirty miles a day, and at the end of the voyage it was estimated that more than 300,000 square miles of ice drifted south out of the Arctic Ocean in three months.

#### Electrical and Rubber Equipment on the Farm

THE supply of electricity to rural areas is continually extending so that increasing numbers of

farmers are interested in this alternative method of lighting their farm buildings and conducting power operations in and around the homestead. In these circumstances a visit to a farm carrying a good equipment of the ordinary machinery as well as a complete electrical installation gives an excellent view of the possibilities. At Rothamsted, a thoroughly up-to-date electrical equipment has been supplied by the General Electrical Co., Ltd., and means are provided for making exact comparisons of electricity and oil as sources of power for farm operations. On June 19 a demonstration of the plant was arranged for a party of experts and farmers. The visitors were conducted round the farm buildings and examined a large number of power operations in progress, the motors ranging from 20 h.p. down to  $\frac{1}{2}$  h.p. according to the nature of the work. A very complete and efficient lighting system was demonstrated and electricity was in use for water heating, sterilising, and various other stationary processes. First-hand information with regard to the engineering details and performance of the machinery was also available. A demonstration of a number of uses of rubber on the farm was arranged by the Dunlop Rubber Co., Ltd. Various types of rubber flooring for stables, cowsheds and piggeries were on view. The visitors also examined the performance of heavily laden farm carts equipped with low-pressure rubber tyres and rubber-tyred tractors at work on the arable land.

#### Scottish Marine Biological Station, Millport

THE Scottish Marine Biological Association's annual report on the work of its laboratory at Millport on the Firth of Clyde, for the year 1931-32, has recently been issued (Glasgow: 185 St. Vincent Street). The Association is to be congratulated on the large measure of success which is attending the important though highly specialised researches upon which its small staff of four is actively engaged. Their work has received high commendation from H.M. Development Commissioners and other interested organisations well qualified to assess its value. Over and above the important work on *Calanus finmarchicus* (see NATURE of June 10, p. 843) which is being done, the results of a considerable number of other researches carried out by the station staff and visiting workers have been published in the course of the year. Chief among these must be mentioned several important memoirs by Miss Marshall, Mr. Orr, and Dr. Nicholls, embodying the results of their researches while members of the Australian Great Barrier Reef Expedition of 1928-29. In common with all other organisations in Great Britain and other countries, the Millport Laboratory has been adversely affected by the present economic depression. The block grant originally voted to it by H.M. Treasury—on condition that a proportional sum be raised independently from other sources—was considerably cut down, and the local contributions fell short of the required amount by fully £100. It is greatly to be hoped that the state of financial stringency which still exists will not be allowed unduly to restrict the activities of this and similar institutions.