

tions of this, his favourite, field of research, and did his best to build up really adequate series upon which future systematists could work. It will require the labour of two or three generations of systematists to exhaust the possibilities of the material now available. It is to be hoped that the Tring Museum will be carried on as a living institution and that enough neighbouring land can be acquired to admit of future extension.

Protection of Aborigines

RECENT correspondence in the Press has shown that there is a considerable body of public opinion which is still far from satisfied with the treatment accorded the races of backward civilization under British jurisdiction, notwithstanding the undoubted improvement in conditions and a more sympathetic attitude towards them to be observed in recent years. With a view to the possibility of further improvement, it has been decided by persons and organizations interested in the problem to hold a public meeting for the discussion of the question of their preservation. The meeting will be held by permission of the Council of the Royal Empire Society in the Assembly Hall of that body on April 28 at 3.45 p.m. The chair will be taken by Lord Moyne, who will speak on "Natives in the Solomon Islands". Other speakers will be Dr. W. van Waterschoot van der Gracht, president of the Pygmy Sub-Committee of the Nederlandsche Commissie voor Internationaale Natuurbescherming, on "The Preservation of Backward Primitive Races"; Dr. John R. Baker on "The Natives of the New Hebrides"; and Dr. Julian Huxley, who will deal generally with the preservation of primitive cultures. Tickets of admission, which is free, may be obtained from the Secretary, Aborigines Protection Society, Denison House, 296 Vauxhall Road, S.W.1.

Indian Cultural Studies

NOTWITHSTANDING the assurance that the Indian collections of the Victoria and Albert Museum, South Kensington, were not to be dispersed and that space would continue to be provided for them in the galleries of that Museum, which followed Mr. de la Valette's lecture before the Indian Section of the Royal Society of Arts (see NATURE, December 25, p. 1108, and January 29, p. 177), the critics of the methods of the ethnographical sections of our national collections are still of the opinion that less than justice is done to requirements for the study of the cultural history of India, compared with what might be attempted with the resources at command. A joint committee accordingly has been formed, consisting of representatives of the five bodies more intimately concerned in the study of India and her peoples. These are the Royal Society of Arts (Indian Section), the India Society, the Royal Asiatic Society, the East India Association and the School of Oriental Studies. Although the joint committee has as yet, it is understood, arrived at no decision as to its precise aims and methods of procedure, in principle the general purpose is to secure provision which in

scope and display, dignity and standing, will be worthy of so great a dependency as India, with its tradition of advanced civilization stretching back thousands of years, and as the place of origin of at least one of the religious systems of the world's history. The traditions of the Victoria and Albert Museum, though it included 'industry' in its original purview, are not such as to foster a treatment of Indian culture in which technology and the humbler arts of life have no less claim, if not indeed a stronger claim, to treatment than fine art. But while the Indian collections continue to be merely a department of a larger unit, they must be subordinated to the purpose of the whole. The joint committee has been criticized, notably by the writer of a letter in *The Times* of March 23, as academic; but surely if its purpose is rightly understood, it is precisely the academic spirit which it aims to avoid. What could be more closely in touch with modern India than a comprehensive museum of Indian culture, which should cover both past and present?

University of Birmingham

AT the last meeting of the Council of the University of Birmingham, the following resolution was passed: "The Council has considered the recommendation of the Finance and General Purposes Committee with regard to the pressing needs of the Department of Physics, involving a capital outlay of about £60,000. It unanimously recognizes the urgency of the requirements, but, owing to the present state of University finance, regrets that it is not possible at present to put this work in hand. It is, however, most desirable in the interests both of teaching and research that there should be no delay, and the Council would be most grateful for any financial help from outside to enable the University to meet these requirements." This is a sequel to a report on the needs of the Physics Department made to the Council by Prof. M. L. Oliphant, who points out that the equipment and general facilities of the Department are totally inadequate for present needs. The time has come to review the temporary expedient adopted twenty years ago of having a considerable portion of the Department in old army huts.

THE scheme for extension of the Physics Department proposed by Prof. Oliphant includes an additional block which would consist of a large central research hall suitable for high-voltage work, flanked by a number of research rooms, a machine room, workshop, dark rooms and a basement room for high-energy X-ray work. The general idea is that the buildings themselves should be simple and less costly than those of the remainder of the University, and the design should be elastic to be capable of readjustment with the changing needs of physical research. The present building could then be used entirely for teaching work and accommodation of staff. Unfortunately, it appears that architectural considerations require that the frontage to the great court should be of the massive and costly type exhibited in the rest of the University building as a

whole, though the rear part radiating out behind the curved frontage might be of the relatively cheap design favoured by Prof. Oliphant. The financial stringency indicated in the resolution of the Council is due to the heavy expenditure required for the completion and equipment of the new Medical School. The needs of the University of Birmingham, particularly in such a subject as physics, should have a first call on the generosity of Midland industrialists.

Protection of Wild Fowl

THE Wild Fowl Enquiry Sub-committee of the British Section of the International Committee for Bird Protection was received on April 6 by Sir Samuel Hoare, the Home Secretary, to discuss the question of the further protection of wild fowl. The deputation, which was introduced by Mr. Perch R. Lowe, chairman of the sub-committee, included its secretary, Miss P. Barclay-Smith, and representatives of bodies interested in the preservation of wild life and of museums. The immediate object which this sub-committee has in view is to promote legislation aimed at the prevention of the importation of wild duck and wild geese into Great Britain during the close season. There is also the further question of preventing the exposure for sale of wild duck during the same period and also of extending the close season to such limits as would be in the interests of the wild duck, sportsmen, and everyone concerned. At the present moment, large consignments of wild duck are shipped from Holland to British markets during our close time, having been caught in the many decoys which that country possesses. In view of the threatened diminution of the status of wild duck brought about by the many adverse factors affecting their welfare at the present time, the commercialization in Europe of any bird habitually shot for either sport or food, or both, cannot rationally be allowed to continue during both the open and close season. It will be remembered that the present sub-committee was successful last year in getting legislation set up to prevent the importation of quail into Great Britain during the close time.

Royal Botanic Garden, Calcutta

A NUMBER of men of science from Great Britain and elsewhere who were attending the jubilee meeting of the Indian Science Congress in January last were able to be present at the celebrations of the hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the Royal Botanic Garden, Sibpur, Calcutta, a note on the history of which appeared in *NATURE* of January 1. Sir James Jeans, president of the Congress, congratulated the Garden on its anniversary. Sir Arthur Hill, director of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, in his address, stated that it was the first time a director of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, had been to India in his official capacity. Sir Arthur pointed out the similarity in position, scientific interest and aesthetic beauty between the two Gardens. He emphasized the importance of the Sibpur Garden, and expressed the hope that the Government of Bengal will recognize

its importance and that the necessary funds will be forthcoming both for the maintenance of the scientific staff and for the upkeep of the living collections. Sir Arthur suggested that Sibpur should, like Kew, serve as a training ground for student gardeners, in order that the many good gardens and parks in India may be maintained at a high standard of excellence. To this end, he suggested that the practice of sending men from Kew to Sibpur as instructors or curators should be continued.

DR. K. BISWAS, the present superintendent of the Royal Botanic Garden, Sibpur, referred to the keen interest taken in its welfare by the late Sir Jagadis Chandra Bose, and also by the late Prof. Hans Molisch, both of whom frequently visited the Garden. Dr. Biswas briefly reviewed the history of the Garden, most of the superintendents of which have been botanists of eminence. Economic botany naturally takes first place in the activities of its scientific staff, and Dr. Biswas gave examples of what has been and is being done in this direction, for example, cultivation and utilization of teak, jute, cotton, flax, tobacco, rubber, coffee, cocoa, etc. The Garden also offers good scope for the study of the tropical flora; 1,500 species are under cultivation. In fact, Indian botany is offered excellent opportunity for advancement with the help of the Royal Botanic Garden, its excellent Herbarium and its Library at Sibpur, Calcutta.

British Empire Cancer Campaign

AT the recent quarterly meeting of the Grand Council of the British Empire Cancer Campaign, a further grant of £1,000 for one year was placed at the disposal of the North of England Council of the Campaign to enable the short wave investigations to be continued under the direction of Dr. F. Dickens and Dr. S. F. Evans. This work, which is a continuation of that which appeared in the last Annual Report of the Campaign and in a recent issue of the *American Journal of Cancer*, concerns the investigations of the effect of varying forms of heat upon malignant tissues. It was also decided to allot a further sum of £1,338 for one year for the extension of the national propaganda work being carried out by the Central Propaganda Committee. Sir Charles Gordon-Watson, vice-chairman of the Clinical Cancer Research Committee, reported that the organization for the statistical cancer inquiries in the teaching and special hospitals of London and the hospitals of the London County Council and the Middlesex County Council has now been completed. He stated that all these Institutions have appointed registrars to take charge of the records at their respective hospitals and that the headquarters' arrangements are being perfected to deal with the data concerning more than 17,000 new cases of cancer yearly in the metropolitan area of London. The Grand Council confirmed the recommendation for the appointment in the near future of a full-time medical secretary and registrar at headquarters for this purpose.