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EDITORIAL NOTES.

THE Annual Report of the Council of the Geological Society of London for 1919, presented at the Anniversary Meeting on February 20, 1920, does not contain any very striking features. It is pleasing to observe that there has been a large increase in the number of new Fellows elected, 81 as against 32 in 1918, and this in spite of the increase of the annual contribution from two to three guineas for Fellows elected after November 1, 1919. During the year it was decided to admit women to the Society, but so far only fourteen have availed themselves of the privilege. The list of medals and awards has already appeared in the Magazine. The publication of the Quarterly Journal has made up some of the leeway, and is now only one year behind date, but the position of the annual index of geological literature seems hopeless, the last issue being that for the year 1912. The continuation of this most useful work seems to be largely a matter of funds, and it is satisfactory to note that the Royal Society has made a grant of £100 towards the publication of the volume for 1913, which it is hoped will soon appear, although its progress has naturally been delayed by the resignation of the Librarian, Mr. C. P. Chatwin. The vacancy thus created has been filled up by the appointment of Captain A. Greig, formerly Assistant Librarian. It is disquieting to find that the estimates anticipate a deficiency of £300 on the working of the Society for the coming year, and geologists who have not yet done so should apply for admission as Fellows, and thus help this, the leading geological society of the world, to maintain unimpaired its great work in the interests of the science.

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At the annual meeting of the Geological Society of America, held at Boston, officers for the year were elected as follows: President, I. C. White, Morgantown, W. Va.; First Vice-President, G. P. Merrill, Washington, D.C.; Second Vice-President, W. G. Miller, Toronto; Third Vice-President, F. B. Loomis, Amherst, Mass. Many papers were read, and a discussion on the teaching of geology attracted much attention. It is an interesting fact that during the meeting two new societies were formed, with the full approval and support of the parent organization. The Mineralogical Society, formed at Cambridge, Mass., elected as its first President E. H. Kraus, of Ann Arbor, and as Secretary H. P. Whitlock, of the American

Museum of Natural History, New York. The other new Society, the Association of Applied Geologists, should do much to fill up the gap that now exists between pure geology and the branches of engineering and other sciences and arts bearing upon the exploitation of our mineral resources. We wish both these new societies a long and prosperous career.

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MANY old Cambridge geologists both at home and abroad will be glad to hear that the Sedgwick Club has entered on a career of renewed activity after the inevitable period of eclipse, due to the War. In the autumn of 1914 the few remaining ordinary members held a meeting at which they appointed a committee, mostly composed of members of the teaching staff, under the chairmanship of the Woodwardian Professor, to hold office till the end of the War, with powers to elect ordinary members. Last May term this committee exercised its powers by nominating sufficient new members to form a quorum, and then extinguished itself. After this matters proceeded in the ordinary way, and the Club is now as flourishing as ever, or even more so, as shown by the following communiqué received from an official source: "The Sedgwick Club has formed a committee for directing and carrying out a detailed study of the Pleistocene and Holocene deposits of the Cambridge district with special reference to questions connected with Ancient Man in Britain. Some years ago a similar committee of the Club studied the distribution of the glacial boulders in the district. The enthusiasm with which that work was carried out, and the interesting results obtained, recorded in a paper by Messrs. Rastall and Romanes (*Quart. Journ. Geol. Soc.*, vol. lxxv, 1909, pp. 246-65) augur well for the success of the present undertaking."

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WITH the opening of Parliament the question of the nationalization of mines has again reached an acute stage, and appears likely to be in the forefront of politics for some time to come. In the debate on the Address the Prime Minister spoke words of solid wisdom, and foreshadowed most determined opposition on the part of the Government to the projects for bureaucratic control of our greatest industry. We have already drawn attention in these columns to the fallacies of the prevailing Fabian arguments in support of nationalization of coal-mines. It is currently reported that labour witnesses before the Board of Trade Committee on non-ferrous mining have spoken in favour of nationalization as a remedy for the troubles of their own particular branch. Everything that has been urged against it in the case of coal-mines applies with even greater force to metalliferous mines, and there is here an added argument of the greatest cogency. It is well-known to every one at all conversant with the subject that metalliferous mining, especially

non-ferrous, offers much greater uncertainties than coal-mining, and, indeed, is almost always inevitably in the nature of a gamble. This is simply a matter of geology, and it is unnecessary to labour the point. Now it is manifestly impossible for the State to enter upon such a hazardous type of speculation with the public funds as capital; even the most academic economist and the most theoretical socialist must recognize this fact, and the inevitable result of the interference of the State and control by a Government department would be the total stoppage of enterprise and development in this direction and a complete cessation of any production of non-ferrous metals in this country. Such a state of affairs is unthinkable.

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THE Board of Trade Committee on non-ferrous metalliferous mines has now completed the taking of evidence, and a report is being prepared which it is hoped will be ready for presentation in the course of a few weeks. At the later sittings of the Committee some interesting evidence was given concerning lead, zinc, and barytes. With regard to the last-named product Col. J. V. Ramsden, of the Shropshire Mines, Ltd., pointed out the need for improved methods of preparation, and also for protection against the dumping of cheap foreign material, if the barytes industry in this country is to be preserved. Mr. J. Mitchell, of Wanlockhead, described the scheme for a very long deep-level gravity tunnel for the drainage of the Wanlockhead-Leadhills district. Much evidence was given concerning the present position of the lead-zinc mining industry in the North of England. It was stated that the Ashover Mines in Derbyshire are now worked almost exclusively for fluor-spar, for which there is a good demand as a flux in metallurgical work. It appears that in many localities the visible supplies of ore are now approaching exhaustion, and Professor Louis considered that the allocation of national funds to investigation of the Melmerby Scar Limestone would be justified, as in his opinion this offers the most promising prospects. In this connexion it may perhaps be allowable to point out that purely geological considerations are of great importance. If the ore came from below there should be a tendency for it to accumulate under such an impervious rock as the Whin Sill. Now it is well known that the sill is transgressive, occurring in different places at very various stratigraphical horizons. Hence the most likely place for ore would seem to be in places where the Whin Sill rests on a well-marked bed of limestone, if such can be found. This evidently needs a close and detailed study of local stratigraphy.

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