

## SCIENCE:

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

*\*\* Correspondents are requested to be as brief as possible. The writer's name is in all cases required as proof of good faith.*

*On request in advance, one hundred copies of the number containing his communication will be furnished free to any correspondent.*

*The editor will be glad to publish any queries consonant with the character of the journal.*

## The International Geological Congress in Washington.

THERE have been numerous unofficial accounts of the late Washington meeting of the Geological Congress, but none has yet appeared in which the attendance and work performed have been compared with those features of the previous congresses.

It will be recalled that at the London session of 1888 the American committee was authorized to invite the Congress to meet in America for its next or fifth session. Austria-Hungary had previously had a quasi promise that the fifth session should be held in Vienna, but her representatives at the London session, Mojsisovics and Stur, gracefully and generously yielded to the invitation from America.

From the official minutes of the meeting of the Council on Wednesday, Sept. 19, we learn that M. Frazer presented, on behalf of many scientific societies and of institutions for higher education, the invitation to meet in the United States in 1891. M. von Zittel, Hauchecorne, Stur, Hunt, Capellini, de Lapparent, and Macfarlane warmly seconded this invitation. The former added that the well-known generosity of Americans would make the visit easy. M. Stur said that the Austro-Hungarian geologists very much desired the congress to be held in Vienna, but after having heard the invitation to meet in the United States he would also support this invitation, in the hope that three years later, or in 1894, the congress would come to Vienna, when he promised them a warm reception. M. Neumayr repeated M. Stur's wish, and hoped that the session of 1894 would be reserved for Vienna.

The last act of the president of the congress, Professor Prestwich, was to declare the session closed and adjourned to Philadelphia in 1891.

Three years is none too long to get the endless details for a meeting of this kind arranged, yet over two years were wasted, and less than twelve available months remained in which to secure the participation of societies and geologists throughout the world, to negotiate special rates of transportation on sea and land, to perfect the plans of visits to mines and distant localities, and, above all, to raise money to entertain the foreign guests in a manner which

they have been taught to understand is the American manner. The result may be gathered by an inspection of the following table, which gives the attendance of members from foreign countries as well as from the country in which the session was held for each of the five sessions. It should be noted that there are no official statistics giving the number enrolled separately from the number which attended the first or Paris session. The "N" in the first horizontal line below the name of the city indicates natives of the country where the session was held; the "F" stands for foreigners.

	Paris 1878	Bologna 1881	Berlin 1885	London 1888	Washington 1891
	N. 193 F. 107	N. 150 F. 75	N. 168 F. 97	N. 281 F. 151	N. 148 F. 58
Argentina.....	-	-	-	1	-
Australia.....	1	-	-	1	-
Austria-Hungary..	5	8	17	10	3
Belgium.....	14	6	6	15	3
Bulgaria.....	-	-	-	1	-
Brazil.....	-	-	1	-	-
Chile.....	-	-	-	-	1
Canada.....	3	1	1	3	2
Denmark.....	1	1	1	-	-
Egypt.....	-	2	-	-	-
France.....	193	18	10	17	5
Germany.....	6	6	166	29	23
Great Britain.....	3	6	12	281	3
Holland.....	3	-	2	1	-
India.....	-	1	-	1	-
Italy.....	15	150	19	12	-
Mexico.....	1	-	-	2	3
Norway.....	2	-	3	2	1
New Zealand.....	-	-	-	1	-
Portugal.....	1	2	1	2	-
Peru.....	-	-	-	-	1
Poland.....	-	3	-	-	-
Roumania.....	9	1	1	2	2
Russia.....	7	6	7	13	8
Sweden.....	6	1	3	4	4
Switzerland.....	10	8	3	5	2
Spain.....	12	4	1	4	-
United States.....	8	1	9	14	148
Percentage of foreigners.....	35.66	33.33	36.88	34.80	28.15

It appears from the table, which has been compiled from the official reports of the first four sessions, and from the report of the Washington session published in the *American Geologist*, that the last or American session was distinguished, first, for the smallest aggregate attendance of participants; second, for the smallest number of native participants; third, for the smallest number of foreign participants; fourth, for the smallest proportion of foreign to total participants.

How far the American participants represented the geologists of the country it is difficult to say, but of the six who were accredited to Philadelphia, one was a professor of physics in the University of Pennsylvania, one was a physician and mineral dealer, two were young mining and geological engineers, one was an amateur mineralogist, and the sixth was a professor of geology.

But the difference in the character of this from all previous sessions of the International Geological Congress becomes apparent when we examine the lists of the foreign visitors. Of men like