

ethylene is replaced by ammonia. A number of other compounds of these salts were formed and in every case were analogous, in crystallographical character as well as in chemical composition. It is interesting to see two compounds, each of which had appeared for half a century or more to be unique, thus shown to be of the same type, and it is by no means impossible that other salts of this type may yet be discovered.

In 1886 Linnemann claimed to have discovered in orthite a new metal which he named *austrium*, but this work was never confirmed. Richard Pribram has recently repeated the work of Linnemann and concludes, as had Lecoq de Boisbaudran, that *austrium* is identical with gallium. But he also concludes from a very thorough spectroscopic examination of the same orthite, that there is a new element present which has not yet been isolated, which is entirely distinct from Linnemann's *austrium*, and to which Pribram proposes to give the earlier name *austrium*.

J. L. H.

*THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
ACADEMIES.**

THE Academy will recall the fact that at the conclusion of the mission entrusted to M. Moissan and myself, consent was given to the 'Projet de Statuts pour l'Association internationale des Académies,' drawn up by the delegates of the nine Academies represented at the Conference held at Wiesbaden early in October last, at the invitation of the Academy of Berlin.

The international Association is now constituted; and it includes the eighteen following Academies:

1. Academy of Sciences.....Amsterdam.
2. Prussian Academy of Sciences..Berlin.
3. Academy of Sciences, Literature and the Fine Arts.....Brussels.
4. Hungarian Academy of ScienceBudapest.
5. Academy of Sciences.....Christiania.
6. Society of Sciences.....Göttingen.

* Translation in *Nature* of a report made to the Paris Academy of Sciences by M. Darboux, permanent Secretary of the Academy, and published in the *Comptes rendus*.

7. Academy of Sciences of Denmark.....Copenhagen.
8. Academy of Sciences of Saxony..Leipzig.
9. Royal Society.....London.
10. Academy of Sciences of BavariaMunich.
11. Academy of Inscriptions and Literature.....Paris.
12. Academy of Sciences.....Paris.
13. Academy of Moral and Political Sciences.....Paris.
14. Academy of Sciences.....St. Petersburg.
15. Academy dei Lincei.....Rome.
16. Swedish Academy of Sciences Stockholm.
17. Academy of Sciences.....Washington.
18. Academy of Sciences.....Vienna.

Amongst the Academies invited to join, one only, the Royal Academy of History of Madrid, has as yet not replied to the request of the Wiesbaden Conference.

The provisional rules take into consideration the possibility of the addition of other learned societies, and in § 2 the conditions and formalities are indicated which will be necessary for the admission of a new Academy.

The Association comprises two Sections, the Section of Literature and the Section of Science. The work will be carried out by general meeting and committee. In principal, the general meeting will be held every three years, and each Academy will send as many delegates as it may deem necessary, but each Academy will have only one vote, which should be given by one of the members of the delegation.

In the interval between two general meetings, the Association is represented by the committee, each Academy being represented on this by one member only, if it concerns itself with only one of the Sections of Literature or Science; it will send two delegates when it is concerned with both Sections. Amongst the eighteen Academies, twelve belong to both Sections and consequently will send two delegates to the committee. Of the other six, four, namely the Royal Society of London, the Academy of Sciences of Paris, the Academy of Stockholm, and the National Academy of Washington, belong to the Section of Science alone, and two, the Academy of Inscriptions and Literature, and the Academy of Moral and Political Sciences, belong to the Section of Literature. Hence the

committee will consist of thirty delegates, of which sixteen will belong to the Section of Science, and fourteen to that of Literature. In full committee the two delegates of one Academy will have only a single vote. After delay, in such cases, all the Academies, with the exception of two or three, have sent in the names of their delegates. The delegates of the principal Academy will take the chair at the committee of the Association, the principal Academy being that of the place in which it is proposed to hold the next general meeting.

The Conference of Wiesbaden having decided on a resolution to which we can here only draw attention, that the first general meeting of the International Association should be held in Paris this year, a difficulty has arisen not foreseen when the provisional rules were drawn up. Three Parisian Academies have joined the Association, it is necessary to decide to which shall be assigned the presidency on this occasion. The delegates of the three Academies of the Institute of France have met, and have unanimously decided to confer for this year the presidency of the Association upon the Academy of Sciences, which was the first to join the Association, and moreover, has taken an active part in the discussions, at the conclusion of which the Association was constituted.

It has been further decided that the first session of the committee shall be held in Paris towards the end of July, the first meeting being fixed for Tuesday, July 31st, at 9:30 a. m., at the Palais de l'Institut.

The agenda for the first meeting will include the preparation of a scheme of government for the committee, the settlement of the exact date and the order of the day for the next general meeting. The Royal Society of London, which has taken so active a part in the formation of the Association, has already announced a scheme which it proposes to submit for approval to this next general meeting; it concerns the measurement of an extended arc of a meridian in the interior of Africa.

The Academy, by the act of joining, has subscribed to the rules of the new Association. There is no occasion to recall here with what prudence and moderation they have been drawn up. The object of the Association is to prepare

and promote scientific work of general interest which may be proposed by one of the constituent Academies, and generally to facilitate scientific relations between different countries. In any particular case, each Academy reserves to itself the right to give or refuse its support, or decide the choice of methods and the means to be employed.

If these principles are followed, the Association will become a powerful instrument of study, of concord and of scientific progress; it will rapidly take its place in the front rank of those international scientific associations, the rôle of which must necessarily be satisfactory.

Faithful to the principles which they have always followed, the three Academies of the Institute of France, called by the nature of their studies into the Association, will strive to assure it the success and influence which have been desired for it by its promoters.

Finally, attention may be directed to a particular clause in the rules which will interest some of our colleagues. For taking into consideration the study or preparation of scientific enterprises or researches of international interest, upon the proposition of one or more of the associated Academies, special international commissions may be instituted either by the general meeting or one of its two Sections or, in the interval between two general meetings, by the committee or one of its two sections.

*DEFECTIVE VISION OF BOARD SCHOOL CHILDREN.**

THE London School Board have just tabulated the results of a test of the eyesight of school children in the Board schools. The object of the test was not to obtain statistical information or to satisfy scientific curiosity, but to achieve the practical end that children whose distant vision is defective should be placed in the front benches in the class room where they are required to see what is written or drawn on the blackboard. Some interesting results, however, have been obtained which are well worth the consideration of the medical profession and the attention of the parents of the children. The School Board at the end of last year requested the teachers to test the eyesight of the

* From the London *Times*.