

passage of this Act no appointments shall be made of such professors unless required for service at the Naval Academy.

SECTION 4, That there shall be a Board of Visitors of the National Observatory, to consist of one Senator, one member of the House of Representatives, and three astronomers of eminence, to be selected by the Secretary of the Navy. The Board of Visitors shall make an annual visitation, or more frequent visitations, of the Observatory, advise with the Director thereof as to the scientific work to be prosecuted, and report to the Secretary of the Navy on the work and needs of the Observatory on or before the first day of November in each year. The members of the said Board may receive an allowance not exceeding ten dollars per day each during their actual presence in the City of Washington while engaged on the duty of the Board and their necessary traveling expenses; but no officer of the Government appointed on the Board shall receive any additional compensation for such duty above his actual expenses.

THE REORGANIZATION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE.

THE Agricultural Appropriation Bill, as presented to the Committee of the Whole of the House of Representatives, contained provisions for the reorganization of the Department of Agriculture, which we much regret were afterwards withdrawn, owing to the point of order being raised that new legislation had been attached to an appropriation bill. It is well-known that the salaries in the Department are too small, and that the Government is constantly losing the services of its trained scientific men. Thus Dr. Loew received a salary of \$1,800 in the Department of Agriculture, and has now accepted a position under the Japanese Government at a salary of \$7,000. The plan proposed by the Committee on Agriculture would have created four new bureaus, the chiefs of which would have received a salary of \$3,500 a year, and who would have been the chiefs of divisions who now receive \$2,500 a year, and

the salaries of the other scientific experts would have been increased by sums varying from \$200 to \$500 each. The total increase in salaries would have been \$26,000. In recommending this plan the Secretary of Agriculture, the Hon. James Wilson, wrote to the Chairman of the Committee on Agriculture, the Hon. J. W. Wadsworth, on January 15th, as follows:

Having gone over with care the proposed plan for the reorganization of the Department of Agriculture, I am pleased to state that it has my entire approval. The grouping together of scientists in kindred lines of work will enable us to bring to bear on each subject considered and on each undertaking before it is begun the experience of all the division chiefs interested, avoiding duplication of work, which quite frequently occurs under our present divisional system, and in that regard will enable us to economize.

The salaries as proposed are not in excess of what is paid to scientists doing like work in educational and experiment station institutions throughout the country, and are, in fact, much below the salaries paid by many institutions in the land that seek men of the greatest experience and highest attainments. The work now being carried on by this Department and the amount of money being expended by Congress justify the employment of the foremost scientists in every line.

We are not able to retain our best men at the present time. Other countries, as well as home institutions, take them away from us by offering more money than our statutory salaries. If it were possible for this Department to go to the country, through the Civil Service Commission, and get scientists well informed regarding the work we are doing for the farmers, the loss of a man now and again would not be so serious.

But this Department is compelled, in many of its divisions, to educate its own men. When they leave us, on account of getting better pay elsewhere, our work in some cases stops until new men can be trained.

I therefore sincerely hope that you will succeed in having the proposed rearrangement enacted into law. It will do much to facilitate our work, and I believe will in the end be economical.

It is to be hoped that the reorganization of the Department, approved by the Secretary of Agriculture and the House Committee on Agriculture, will be introduced as a special bill. Scientific men at Washington can not well advocate a measure that increases their salaries, and there is consequently every reason for those interested in science and not connected with the Government service to use all efforts to secure the introduction and passage of a measure that is essential for efficiency and economy.

SCIENTIFIC NOTES AND NEWS.

AT a meeting of the Prussian Academy of Sciences, held on January 24th, the announcement was made that the Helmholtz Medal had been conferred upon Sir George Gabriel Stokes, of Cambridge University. The medal has hitherto been conferred only on Professor Virchow and Lord Kelvin.

AT a meeting of the Council of the Astronomical and Astrophysical Society of America, held in New York, on January 29th, at which all members of the Council save one were present, the previous action by which Denver was designated as the next place of meeting for the Society was reconsidered, and by unanimous vote the Council determined to hold no meeting during the summer of 1901. In lieu of the customary summer meeting of the Society, a winter meeting will be held in the City of Washington during the next Christmas holidays, and Professors Newcomb and Brown were appointed a local committee to arrange the details of such meeting. The Committee upon Legislation affecting astronomical interests made through its chairman a report of progress, and was continued. Professor W. W. Campbell, director of the Lick Observatory, was elected a member of the Council in place of the late Professor James E. Keeler.

PROFESSOR R. W. WOOD, of the University of Wisconsin, has decided not to accept the invitation of the director of the U. S. Naval Observatory to go to Sumatra as a member of the eclipse expedition, but he has fitted up a polarizing spectroscope to test the method, recently

described by him in *SCIENCE*, of photographing the Fraunhofer lines in the spectrum of the corona, by placing a Nicol prism in front of the slit of the instrument in such a position as to transmit the polarized light reflected by the coronal particles. Dr. Norman E. Gilbert, of the Johns Hopkins University, will operate the instrument, the observations being both visual and photographic. The visual work will be confined to the few moments at second and third contact, when the flash spectrum is seen.

THE Reale Accademia dei Lincei of Rome has elected to membership the Duke of the Abruzzi.

DR. M. CANTOR, honorary professor of mathematics in the University of Heidelberg, has been elected a corresponding member of the St. Petersburg Academy of Sciences.

MR. EVELYN B. BALDWIN returned to New York on February 3rd, after having arranged, while abroad, for two vessels for his North Polar Expedition.

PROFESSOR FRANCIS E. LLOYD, of Teachers College, Columbia University, has gone abroad on a leave of absence, and will spend the next eight months at Bonn.

DR. WILLIAM R. BROOKS, director of the Smith Observatory and professor of astronomy in Hobart College, Geneva, N. Y., recently delivered two illustrated lectures in the opera house of that city on 'The Wonders of the Sun and the late Eclipse.' The stereopticon views included a large number of photographs of the eclipse in its partial phases, made at the Smith Observatory, and others taken at different points along the total belt.

A BRONZE bas-relief of the late Professor M. S. Newberry, the eminent geologist, has been presented to Columbia University by his children.

A BUST of Dr. Horace Green, who died in 1866, was presented to the New York Academy of Medicine on February 8th by Mrs. Green and George Walton Green. Dr. D. B. St. John Roosa made a commemorative address.

MILES ROCK, whose death in Guatemala was noted in *SCIENCE* of February 8th, was from 1883 to 1898 chief engineer and president of the Guatemala Commission to locate the