

taken the degree of doctor of philosophy, and who had, therefore, received their academic equipment for their life work.

In discussing the best type of examination for the doctor's degree, it was held very emphatically that the practice which is growing up in our universities, especially in some of the departments dealing with natural science subjects, of permitting the candidate to pass his examination course by course, as is usual in undergraduate instruction, is a pernicious one, and one which stands in the way of the attainment of the best and broadest scholarship. It was held that the examination for the doctor's degree should, in all cases, be upon subjects and not upon courses of instruction; the underlying principle being that the courses of instruction which a graduate student attends are but a small part of the work which he is supposed to do in order to prepare himself for his examination.

It was developed that there was some difference of practice between the universities as to the formal examination for the degree of doctor of philosophy. On the whole, I think it may be said that it was the opinion of most of those who expressed themselves, that great stress should be laid upon the oral examination at the time when the candidate finally presents himself for his degree, and that if any subordinate examinations are held previous to this time, either upon courses or upon subjects, they should be given very little weight in estimating the capacity of the candidate.

It was voted unanimously to approve the suggestion of the committee appointed by the Council of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, that there be set aside a week to be known as Convocation Week, in order that the various learned societies of the country may arrange to hold their meetings at that time.

It was also voted to print in pamphlet form an abstract of the proceedings of the first and second annual meetings of the Association, and to assess the cost thereof upon the fourteen institutions equally.

The place and date of the meeting of 1902 were referred to the incoming executive committee with power.

The officers chosen for the year were: *President*, Columbia University; *Vice-President*, University of Michigan; *Secretary*, University of Chicago; additional *Members of the Executive Committee*, Harvard University, University of California.

THE NAVAL OBSERVATORY.

SENATOR CHANDLER'S amendment to the Naval Appropriation Bill, providing a Board of Visitors to the Naval Observatory and requiring the Superintendent to be a line officer of the Navy not below the rank of Captain, was, after stout and repeated resistance by the House conferees, at last accepted, with, however, an amendment, consisting of the words 'until further legislation by Congress,' the concluding clause reading: "The Superintendent of the Naval Observatory shall be, until further legislation by Congress, a line officer of the Navy of a rank not below that of Captain." This, of course, indicates that in the opinion of the House conferees further legislation should follow. The bill was finally passed by both Houses without debate on these provisions.

It appears from the following extract from the Washington *Evening Star* of the 8th inst., that the affairs of the Observatory are likely to be kept before the public:

Charges have been preferred to the Navy Department by Capt. Charles H. Davis, U. S. N., superintendent of the United States naval observatory, against Professor Stimson J. Brown, director of the Nautical Almanac, head of the mathematical branch of the observatory, who is an officer of the navy with the rank of captain. Both officers are well known in naval and scientific circles. The Secretary of the Navy has had copies of the charges laid before Professor Brown, preliminary to the usual procedure of a court of inquiry, which will determine whether the charges are of a character to warrant a court-martial.

It was at first understood that Professor Brown had been placed under arrest by Captain Davis, but it is said in some official quarters that there has been no arrest, and in others it is stated that, at most, the arrest is technical, following the preferring of charges, and in no way involving any restraint.

The papers were first transmitted to Admiral Bradford, chief of the bureau of equipment, who has supervision of the Observatory, and by him they were laid before Secretary Long. The papers are not made public in such cases and, owing to the personal nature

of the controversy, the officials have surrounded the matter with the greatest secrecy.

It can be stated, however, that the charges come under four main heads, viz., that the accused resorted to intriguing methods to bring about the administration of affairs which he desired; that he made statements as coming from Captain Davis which that officer controverts; that he threatened the superintendent with attacks upon the floor of Congress, and neglect of duty.

For the present the action of the Navy Department awaits the course that Professor Brown may adopt on the copy of the charges which has been laid before him.

SCIENTIFIC NOTES AND NEWS.

WE record with much regret the death of Dr. George Mercer Dawson, director of the Geological Survey of Canada, which occurred on March 2d, after an illness of only two days.

DR. SAMUEL W. STRATTON has been appointed by President McKinley director of the newly established National Bureau of Standards. Dr. Stratton is professor of physics in the University of Chicago, but has, for the past year, had leave of absence to take charge of the Office of Standard Weights and Measures.

THE President has also appointed a Board of Visitors to the U. S. Naval Observatory, in accordance with the provisions of recent legislation, as follows: St. Clair McKelway, of Brooklyn, N. Y.; Asaph Hall, Jr., of Ann Arbor, Mich.; William R. Harper, of Chicago; Edward C. Pickering, of Cambridge, Mass.; Charles A. Young, of Princeton, N. J.; Ormond Stone, of Charlottesville, Va.

DR. ROBERT BELL, one of the assistant directors of the Geological Survey of Canada, has been appointed director in succession to the late Dr. George M. Dawson.

MR. J. E. SPURR, of the U. S. Geological Survey, has accepted an invitation of the Turkish Government to make an investigation of the mineral resources of the country.

DR. W. B. SCOTT, professor of geology in Princeton University, expects to leave in May for South America in the interests of the work carried on in Patagonia by several Princeton expeditions.

MR. W. H. FISK, of Durham, N. C., has

been appointed assistant State entomologist of Georgia.

SIGNOR MARCONI was one of the passengers on the *Majestic* which left Liverpool for New York on March 6th.

AT the annual meeting of the Hunterian Society, London, on February 13th, Dr. J. Dundas Grant was elected president of the Society. The annual address was given by Mr. John Poland, who gave a retrospect of surgery during the last century.

ON account of ill-health Dr. Frank Russell has been compelled to omit some of his courses in anthropology at Harvard University, and to relinquish others to another instructor. Having been ordered to a more healthful climate he will occupy the year of exile in carrying on archeological investigations in the Southwest.

PROFESSOR GEORGE S. WILKINS, C.E., professor of engineering at the University of Alabama, has been made Chevalier of the Legion of Honor by the French Government for services on the International Jury of Awards of the Paris exposition. Professor Wilkins was expert of the department of civil engineering and transportation for the commissioner general of the United States at this exposition. He was also the official United States delegate to the following International congresses: Tramways, Applied Mechanics, Technical and Industrial Education and Acetylene Gas.

IN memory of the late Dr. Walter Myers, whose life was sacrificed in the study of yellow fever, a chair of tropical medicine has been endowed in the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine, to be called the Walter Myers' chair. A gravestone will be erected where Dr. Myers is buried in Brazil, and a memorial plate will be placed in the Birmingham Hospital.

DR. JOHN MINOT RICE died at his home in Northboro', Mass., on March 2d, at the age of 68 years. He was a graduate of the Lawrence Scientific School, Harvard University, and was appointed professor of mathematics at the Naval Academy at Annapolis in 1870.

THERE will be a civil service examination for the position of topographic draughtsman in the office of the surveyor general at San Francisco.