

# SCIENCE

A WEEKLY JOURNAL DEVOTED TO THE ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE, PUBLISHING THE  
OFFICIAL NOTICES AND PROCEEDINGS OF THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION  
FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE.

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## THE MEETING OF THE AMERICAN SOCIETY OF NATURALISTS IN CHICAGO DURING CONVOCATION WEEK.

For the first time in its history the American Society of Naturalists, together with various affiliated societies, will hold its annual meeting in Chicago as guests of the University of Chicago during the week beginning December 30. A cordial invitation has been extended to the several societies by the Naturalists of the Interior and there is every reason to anticipate a large and successful meeting. It is greatly to be desired that naturalists in the east shall make a special effort to attend this meeting, as it is not likely that meetings of the American Society of Naturalists will often be held at a point so distant from the coast.

The American Society of Naturalists of late years has become chiefly a nucleus around which various affiliated societies of a more or less technical character are gathered, and the functions of the parent society have been reduced, to put the matter epigrammatically, to a discussion and a dinner. Those who have watched its progress most carefully believe that this evolution has been natural and logical. The time has clearly gone by when specialists

can be expected to listen with patience or with profit to the technical discussions of other specialists. But at the same time, as all biologists, at least, must recognize, differentiation with its inherent drawbacks must be corrected by some sort of careful cooperation of dissimilars, and it would appear that here, as in the bodies of living organisms coordination, though perhaps less conspicuous than the work of the specialized parts, is even more important.

The 'discussion,' which has become one of the two important features of the work of the Naturalists, has in the past generally proved useful and interesting. The subject chosen for this year is in no wise inferior to those of earlier years, namely, 'The Relation of the American Society of Naturalists to other Scientific Societies,' and it is likely that the whole subject of convocation week, winter meetings *versus* summer meetings, the proper function of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and similar subjects of vital importance to the organization of American science in the future, will be thoroughly threshed out.

Hardly less important than the discussion is the 'dinner,' at which all members of all the affiliated societies should have an opportunity of becoming acquainted. It is greatly to be hoped that the *ménu* this year will be made simple and short and the service prompt, in order to allow time afterwards for making acquaintances, 'talking shop,' comparing notes, and the like. By fortunate custom all ordinary after-dinner speaking has been done away with, and in its stead with the sole accom-

paniment of coffee and cigars the president's address is given. This perhaps should be accounted the third feature of importance of the meeting of the Naturalists, and it ought to be distinctly understood that the president's address should not deal with technicalities within his own specialty but with some large subject of general interest or importance, if possible, to all naturalists and men of science. We are glad to observe that the address of the President for the current year seems likely to be of this character, the topic announced being the 'Modern Subjection of Science and Education to Propaganda.'

There is a strong feeling on the part of many men of science in America that summer scientific meetings ought to be given up, or at all events subordinated to a great winter meeting. It is argued that it is too much to expect of anyone who is comfortably resting or working in the mountains or by the sea that he shall expose himself to the fatigues and depression of tropical railroading, and the sometimes blistering heat of cities, in order to read or listen to scientific papers. A wise adaptation to the environment—when we cannot modify it—is a fundamental law of life, and it is urged with much force that the rapid growth in favor of winter meetings is simply a natural and inevitable adaptation of this kind to the environment. As our readers know, a large majority of the leading American universities and colleges have, at the instance of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, decided to set aside for the meetings of scientific and learned societies the week in which the first of January

falls. The meetings at Chicago of the Council of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and of the American Society of Naturalists and affiliated societies consequently mark the establishment of convocation week. This fact alone should make the approaching meeting one of unusual importance, and we desire once more to urge upon all naturalists who can possibly do so, and especially those in the east, the duty as well as the privilege of attending the Chicago meeting.

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*EXTRACTS FROM PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT'S  
MESSAGE TO THE CONGRESS.*

A SECRETARY OF COMMERCE AND  
INDUSTRIES.

THERE should be created a cabinet officer, to be known as secretary of commerce and industries, as provided in the bill introduced at the last session of the Congress. It should be his province to deal with commerce in its broadest sense, including among many other things whatever concerns labor and all matters affecting the great business corporations and our merchant marine. The course proposed is one phase of what should be a comprehensive and far-reaching scheme of constructive statesmanship for the purpose of broadening our markets, securing our business interests on a safe basis, and making firm our new position in the international industrial world; while scrupulously safeguarding the rights of wage-worker and capitalist, of investor and private citizen, so as to secure equity as between man and man in this republic.

THE PACIFIC CABLE.

I call your attention most earnestly to the crying need of the cable to Hawaii and the Philippines, to be continued from the Philippines to points in Asia. We should

not defer a day longer than necessary the construction of such a cable. It is demanded not merely for commercial but for political and military considerations. Either the Congress should immediately provide for the construction of a Government cable, or else an arrangement should be made by which like advantages to those accruing from a Government cable may be secured to the Government by contract with a private cable company.

THE ISTHMIAN CANAL TREATY.

No single great material work which remains to be undertaken on this continent is of such consequence to the American people as the building of a canal across the Isthmus connecting North and South America. Its importance to the nation is by no means limited merely to its material effects upon our business prosperity; and yet with a view to these effects alone it would be to the last degree important for us immediately to begin it. While its beneficial effects would perhaps be most marked upon the Pacific coast and the Gulf and south Atlantic States, it would also greatly benefit other sections. It is emphatically a work which it is for the interest of the entire country to begin and complete as soon as possible; it is one of those great works which only a great nation can undertake with prospects of success, and which, when done, are not only permanent assets in the nation's material interests, but standing monuments to its constructive ability.

THE SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION.

The advancement of the highest interests of national science and learning and the custody of objects of art and of the valuable results of scientific expeditions conducted by the United States have been committed to the Smithsonian Institution. In furtherance of its declared purpose—for the 'increase and diffusion of knowledge