

SCIENCE

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FRIDAY, DECEMBER 27, 1901.

THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE AD-
VANCEMENT OF SCIENCE.

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REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON CONVOCATION WEEK.

THE Committee on Convocation Week has continued its work and has secured the allegiance of a large number of important educational institutions to the plan. The proposal has been so generally accepted and has met with such cordial approval that the committee regards its permanent success as secured.

It will be remembered that the first step taken was to communicate to the Association of American Universities, on behalf of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the proposition to establish the week in which the first of January falls as Convocation Week, to be set aside for the meetings of national scientific and learned societies. The Association of Universities formally recommended by a unanimous vote the adoption of this proposition, and it has since been adopted by nearly all the universities belonging to that association.

A report of the progress made was published by the committee in SCIENCE, N. S. Vol. XIII., p. 641, and in the same journal, Vol. XIII., p. 996, appeared an editorial article advocating the plan for a convocation week, and defining some of its advantages. The Committee has had its report and the

editorial reprinted for its use, and has distributed copies to the governing bodies of numerous universities and colleges.

At its recent Denver meeting the American Association voted to hold its next meeting at Pittsburg, beginning June 28, 1902, but to hold a special meeting of the Council at Chicago during Convocation Week, 1901-02, and to authorize any section of the Association to organize a meeting at the same time and place. This was the first formal adoption of Convocation Week for scientific meetings. The Association further voted to recommend to its present Council to hold a regular meeting of the Association during Convocation Week, 1902-3, at Washington. Since then important advances have been made in the development of the plan in two ways:

First, it is to be reported that Convocation Week this year will be immediately utilized for the meetings of national societies, the following having already voted to hold their meetings during that period:

The Council of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

The American Society of Naturalists.

The American Morphological Society.

The Association of American Anatomists.

The American Physiological Society.

The American Psychological Association.

The Western Philosophical Society.

The Society of American Bacteriologists.

The Botanists of the Central and Western States.

The American Folk Lore Society.

Section H (Anthropology), American Association for the Advancement of Science.

The American Chemical Society.

The Astronomical and Astrophysical Society of America.

The Geological Society of America.

The Society for Plant Morphology and Physiology.

The American Historical Society.

The American Economic Association.

Second, it is to be reported that the Committee has sent a formal communication to the president of every university, college and technological school included in *Minerva*. The total number of these is 50,

to which must be added the fourteen universities which had been previously communicated with, making a total of 64 institutions. The formal communication was addressed to the president or corresponding officer of each institution, and read as follows:

BOSTON, September 15, 1901.

Dear Sir:

The American Association for the Advancement of Science has the honor to request the cooperation of your college in setting aside the week in which the first of January falls as 'Convocation Week' for the meetings of learned societies.

At the New York meeting the Association appointed a Committee, consisting of its President, R. S. Woodward; its Permanent Secretary, L. O. Howard; of Professors J. McK. Cattell and E. L. Nichols, and of the undersigned as Chairman, to take charge of the matter. The Committee presented the plan to the Association of American Universities, which body, at its recent meeting, voted unanimously to recommend the adoption of the plan by the universities. Since then, the following twelve universities, members of the Association, have acted favorably upon the recommendation:

The University of California.

The Catholic University of America.

Clark University.

Columbia University.

Cornell University.

Johns Hopkins University.

Leland Stanford Junior University.

The University of Michigan.

The University of Pennsylvania.

Princeton University.

The University of Wisconsin.

Yale University.

For your further information the accompanying documents are enclosed, both reprinted from *SCIENCE*. The first gives the general arguments for the proposed 'Convocation Week,' the second indicates the various plans of cooperation adopted by the different universities, all intended to secure the essential point—releasing the teachers of the university from their official duties to enable them to attend the meetings of 'Convocation Week.'

It will give me pleasure to furnish any further information in my power, should you desire it.

Permit me, on behalf of the Committee, to express the hope that your institution will be able to give its support to the project to establish 'Convocation Week,' for we believe that no more important meas-

ure for the promotion of learning in America has ever been proposed.

I have the honor to remain,

Yours, with the highest respect,

CHARLES S. MINOT,
Chairman.

President A. A. A. S.

Harvard Medical School,
Boston, Mass.

Replies, in every case favorable, have been received from the following institutions :

Woman's College of Baltimore.

University of Buffalo.

Case School of Applied Science.

University of Colorado.

Columbian University, Washington.

Hamilton College.

Knox College, Galesburg, Ohio.

Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Michigan College of Mines.

University of Minnesota.

University of Nebraska.

New York University.

College of the City of New York.

Northwestern University.

Oberlin College.

University of Syracuse.

Tufts College, Boston.

Vassar College.

Wellesley College.

Wesleyan University.

Western Reserve University.

Williams College.

The action has not been uniform, for in a few institutions no change in the vacation was necessary, but several institutions have changed the dates of their vacation to allow the necessary time for Convocation Week to become free. A small minority of the institutions have voted to allow their teachers leave of absence to attend meetings during Convocation Week. Almost every reply has included an expression of cordial approval of the plan.

The Committee hopes to continue and extend its correspondence with those universities and colleges which have not yet taken action, and to be able later to report their adhesion.

The facts above reported seem to the Committee to justify the expectation that the proposed Convocation Week will be permanently established through its formal acceptance by all the leading higher educational institutions of the country.

CHARLES S. MINOT, *Chairman*,
R. S. WOODWARD,
E. L. NICHOLS,
L. O. HOWARD,
J. McK. CATTELL.

A CENTURY OF PROGRESS IN ACOUSTICS.

IN selecting the 'Progress of Acoustics,' on its experimental side, as the subject for this year's presidential address, I am fully alive to the fact that this branch of science has been comparatively neglected by physicists for many years, and that consequently I cannot hope to arouse the interest which the choice of a more popular subject might command. It is, however, just because of this neglect of an important field of science that I conceive it to be my duty to direct some attention thereto. This duty I can best perform, it seems to me, by taking a survey of the work accomplished in this particular field during the century that has just closed. Such a survey will make it evident not only that the science of acoustics has made immense progress during that time, but also that many of the experimental methods in use in other branches of physical science were invented and first employed in the course of acoustical research. This latter fact, though not generally recognized, furnishes an illustration of the interdependence which exists between the various branches of physical science, and suggests the probability that the work of acoustical research in the future may be advanced by experimental methods specially designed for investigation in other fields. A revival will, of course, come in time for acoustics, as it has recently come for electricity, and it ought to come all the