

ment. Of course, we must include in the estimate the millions being expended at the Naval Academy for the improvement of its facilities. To expend such sums in training officers to perform duty that civilians are now carrying on at far less cost would be a most unjustifiable expenditure of the public money.

The slight reason for the employment of naval officers on civil duty which formerly existed has entirely disappeared with the lapse of time. For several years after the civil war we had more officers than were necessary for the management of our ships and the administration of shore stations. Under these circumstances there was no objection to their employment on such outside service as might be appropriate. But all this has now been changed. The cry in every department of the naval service is for more officers. We hear daily stories of the department's inability to man its ships properly. Why should the service be deprived of its trained officers if this is the case?

The practice of foreign nations has been cited in favor of the proposed action. It is true that the hydrographic surveys of the leading countries of Europe are carried on to a large extent by their respective naval departments. But this statement needs to be supplemented by two others. Both the administration and the personnel of foreign surveys are to a greater or less extent distinct from those which relate to naval duty properly so called. In France the surveys are all conducted by a special corps of 'hydrographic engineers,' and not by line officers at all. In England, by custom, the hydrographer of the admiralty is permanently withdrawn from military duty. He can, of course, be restored to it if such a course is desirable, but practically this is seldom, if ever, done.

These features of foreign hydrographic surveys have always been successfully antagonized by our naval authorities, and we can not suppose that they have changed their minds on the subject. The transfer of the Coast Survey to the Navy Department, whatever may be the intentions of those who favor it, practically means the administration of the

survey and the performance of its most difficult work by officers of the navy, each temporarily withdrawn from naval service proper for this special duty, which he is expected to abandon for life about the time when he has obtained a respectable measure of skill in its performance. A civilian organization under the Secretary of the Navy, however plausible it may be made to appear, is an impossibility in the present state of naval opinion.

The law organizing the Department of Commerce gave the President authority to transfer to it bureaus from other departments of the government, that of the navy included. There is good reason to believe that this provision was expected to lead to the inclusion of the National Observatory, and perhaps of the Hydrographic Office also, within the new department. The transfer of the former is loudly called for by all the facts of its history and present position, and if any unification of the government hydrographic surveys is to be carried out, it should be done by transferring the Hydrographic Office also, for it has no necessary relation to the Navy Department whatsoever, and properly belongs to the Department of Commerce.

NUTRITION EXPERIMENTS.

IN response to the many inquiries regarding the investigation on nutrition now being carried on at New Haven, Professor Chittenden, Director of the Sheffield Scientific School, has made the following statement:

Through the courtesy of Secretary Root and Surgeon General O'Reilly of the Army, the War Department will cooperate with the Sheffield Laboratory in a physiological study of the minimal amount of proteid or albuminous food required for the maintenance of health and strength under ordinary conditions of life. In carrying out this purpose, twenty men have been detailed from the Hospital Corps of the Army, and will be in New Haven on Monday, under the charge of Lieutenant Wallace DeWitt, Assistant Surgeon in the U. S. Army, and three non-commissioned officers. The Scientific School has fitted up a house on Vanderbilt Square, at the corner of Temple and

Wall streets, where the men will be housed and cared for during the period of the investigation, doubtless for about nine months.

In this study there are no special theories involved and no special systems of dietetics, but the object especially aimed at is to ascertain experimentally whether physiological economy in diet cannot be practiced with distinct betterment to the body and without loss of strength and vigor. There is apparently no question that people ordinarily consume much more food than there is any real necessity for, and that this excess of food is in the long run detrimental to health and defeats the very objects aimed at. It is with a view to gather as many facts as possible on this subject that the study in question is undertaken.

This investigation is merely a continuation, on a larger scale, of earlier observations made in the Sheffield Laboratory of the Sheffield Scientific School last year, and referred to in an article in the *Popular Science Monthly* by Professor Chittenden, and bears directly upon the question of a possible physiological economy in nutrition.

THE BUREAU OF FISHERIES.

ON the first of last July the United States Commission of Fish and Fisheries, until then an independent bureau not attached to any government department, became a part of the new Department of Commerce and Labor.

With the transfer the name was changed. The 'United States Commission of Fish and Fisheries' is now a thing of the past, so far as the name is concerned, and it will hereafter be known as the 'Bureau of Fisheries,'—a title certainly much shorter and more usable than the old. Many of us loved the title under which this branch of our government gained and still maintains an honored name among biologists, fish-culturists and anglers throughout the world, cumbersome and unwieldy as that title was; but we welcome the more simple name and have no doubt but that the 'Bureau of Fisheries' will soon become equally honored and well known.

The principal positions in the Bureau of

Fisheries and the men who fill them are as follows:

Commissioner, Hon. Geo. M. Bowers.

Deputy Commissioner, Dr. H. M. Smith.

Assistant in Charge of Scientific Inquiry and Ichthyologist, Dr. Barton Warren Evermann.

Assistant in Charge of Fish Culture, Mr. John W. Titcomb.

Assistant in Charge of Statistics and Methods of the Fisheries, Mr. A. B. Alexander.

Chief Clerk, Mr. Irving H. Dunlap.

Disbursing Officer, Mr. W. P. Titcomb.

Engineer and Architect, Mr. Hector von Bayer.

SCIENTIFIC NOTES AND NEWS.

SIR WILLIAM RAMSAY, the eminent British chemist, and M. Henri Poincaré, the eminent mathematical physicist, have been elected corresponding members of the Vienna Academy of Sciences.

PROFESSOR M. ALLEN STARR, M.D., LL.D., of the Medical Department of Columbia University, of New York, has been elected a corresponding member of the Neurological Society of the United Kingdom, London. Dr. Weir Mitchell is the only other American member.

THE International Geological Congress awarded its Spendiarrow prize to Professor W. C. Brogger of Christiania.

PROFESSOR C. S. SHERRINGTON, of the University of Liverpool, gave the address at the opening of the new medical buildings of the University of Toronto, which have been fully described in *SCIENCE*. Professor Sherrington will visit some of the medical centers of the United States before returning to England.

PROFESSOR THEODORE WILLIAM RICHARDS, having recovered from his illness, has been made chairman of the Division of Chemistry in Harvard University, in place of Professor Charles Loring Jackson. Professor Jackson retains the Erving professorship and all his other work in research and instruction, resigning the chairmanship alone.

DR. W. W. CAMPBELL, director of the Lick Observatory, was expected to lecture this week at Wellesley College, on 'The Motions of the Solar System through Space.'