

and Thursday evenings, between 7:30 and 9 o'clock from Mr. Benjamin R. Andrews, Room 111, Teachers College.

PROFESSOR OSBORN AND THE SECRETARY-
SHIP OF THE SMITHSONIAN
INSTITUTION.

PROFESSOR HENRY FAIRFIELD OSBORN has declined the secretaryship of the Smithsonian Institution, to which he was elected by the regents on December 4. His letter to Hon. Melville W. Fuller, chancellor of the Smithsonian Institution, dated New York, December 11, contains a full statement of all the reasons which, after reconsideration, finally render Professor Osborn unable to accept the post of secretary. Chief among these reasons is the fact that he is nearing the completion of several monographs and books, the prosecution of which is dependent upon the collections which he has brought together in New York and the staff of trained assistants who are working with him. Among these works especially is the 'History of the Tertiary or Fossil Mammals of North America,' the 'Titanotheres Monograph' and the 'Sauropoda Monograph' for the United States Geological Survey, which were begun by the late Professor O. C. Marsh, a monograph on the evolution of the horse in preparation for the American Museum of Natural History series, also a popular volume on the evolution of the horse to be published by Columbia University, in addition to a large number of minor or supplementary papers and researches. The main tenor of Professor Osborn's letter is shown in the following abstract:

I was absolutely taken by surprise and deeply moved by your generous action in voting to elect me to the most honorable post of Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution. It is the greatest honor I have received or expect to receive; yet after several days which I have devoted almost exclusively to reflection on this matter from every standpoint, I find myself unable to accept your invitation.

I desire to explain to you fully why I have reached this conclusion, and I trust I may be able to convince you it is through no lack of the sense of public duty which should inspire every American. I hope I may convince you also that accept-

ance would involve a change of career just at a time when I am trying to publish the results of thirty years of research. These results would have been partly or entirely in print at this time had it not been that for the past sixteen years I have been interrupted and drawn away by executive and administrative work of the *very* character which would be demanded of your new secretary on a grander scale. The possibility of *continuing and completing these researches and at the same time serving the office as it should be served* is the point on which my attention has been centered during the past few days.

As to *time for research*, my friend Dr. Alexander Graham Bell in the course of two conferences has assured me that the Regents especially desire an investigator as well as an administrator; in other words, that the secretary should continue his scientific researches, whatever they may happen to be, and I have tried to convince myself that even with my peculiar temperament I might be able to withdraw from time to time to pursue and complete these publications. On this point I have chiefly reflected, reviewing my experience here in far less responsible positions. Naturally there is some strong pressure here against my acceptance of the post; but to reach an impartial conclusion I have listened chiefly to those who *desire to see me accept*. In these conferences and among the numerous letters of congratulation which I have received from scientific workers in all parts of the country, I have not found one to hold out the hope or expectation that my scientific researches will continue even as they have in the past. I am myself convinced that even with the assured cooperation of a very able staff, the ideal development of the Smithsonian with all its auxiliary institutions will require nothing less than the entire time, thought, energy, and strength of the secretary for four or five years to come. The quiet days of Joseph Henry and even of Spencer F. Baird in this country have passed. The enormous growth of the country, the telephone, the telegraph, the wireless, the great newspaper, make the seclusion and quiet absolutely essential for research increasingly difficult every day.

Failure in the post or anything short of complete success would disappoint you and would disappoint the public, who naturally cannot appreciate the undisturbed conditions essential to the prosecution of successful intellectual work. Other men may be so constituted as to assume a grand office like the secretaryship, with its splendid possibilities for the future, and not have it

on their minds day and night; unfortunately perhaps, I am not so constituted.

The matter of *materials* for the completion of my work presents a still more serious difficulty, because palæontology differs substantially from many other branches of zoology. We have here the finest palæontological collection in existence, as the result of sixteen years of exploration and purchase, a staff of over twenty highly trained assistants, preparators, field workers and artists, all harmoniously working toward a common end. The opportunity could not be recreated in Washington because it is in a branch of pure science which least of all bears upon human welfare and happiness and is, moreover, extremely expensive. As secretary of the Smithsonian I could not conscientiously recommend the annual appropriation of \$25,000 to \$30,000, to this branch, and I know I should not have the support of Congress for other more vital subjects if I did. In other words, a change of residence would cut me off from my materials of research.

In brief, I have finally and for many reasons very regretfully reached the conclusion that the secretaryship would mean a change of career, just at the moment when I feel that without selfishness I am on the point of bringing out the results of many years' labor. I trust that these results are really important, that they will tend to advance American science, and that they will inspire younger men to broad and thorough standards and to strive for absolute truth rather than for brilliant and short-lived generalizations.

I hope I have been able in this long letter to win you over to the point of view which I have reached after most conscientious reconsideration of this matter, and that I shall retain the confidence and esteem which prompted you to vote for me, which I value far more highly than I can possibly express. May I beg also that you will make it generally understood that I am clearly unable to reach any other decision.

**PRELIMINARY PROGRAM OF THE NEW
YORK MEETING OF THE AMERICAN
ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCE-
MENT OF SCIENCE AND THE
AFFILIATED SCIENTIFIC
SOCIETIES.¹**

Wednesday, December 26.

Registration.—Hotel Belmont, opposite the Grand Central Station, W. 42d Street.

¹This program contains only certain of the main features of the meeting. Members should

Executive committee of the council of the American Association. Hotel Belmont, noon.

Smokers. Hotel Belmont and Murray Hill Hotel, 8:30 P.M.

Thursday, December 27.

Registration. Earl Hall, Columbia University (Broadway, Amsterdam Avenue and 116th St.). To be reached by subway express trains on Broadway from the hotel headquarters and railway terminals.

Council of the American Association. Trustees Room, Library, Columbia University, 9 A.M.

General session. Introduction of the president of the meeting, Dr. William H. Welch, Johns Hopkins University, by the retiring president, Dr. C. M. Woodward, Washington University. Welcome by President Butler, Columbia University. Announcements. Earl Hall, 10 A.M.

Organization of Sections.—Addresses of Vice-president F. W. McNair in mechanical science and engineering; Vice-president George Grant MacCurdy on 'Some Phases of Prehistoric Archeology.' Programs of Sections.—The sections will meet as follows: Mathematics and Astronomy, 506 Fayerweather Hall; Physics, 301 Fayerweather; Chemistry, 309 Havenyter; Mechanical Science and Engineering, 302 Engineering; Geology and Geography, 305 Schermerhorn; Zoology, 618 Schermerhorn; Botany, 502 Schermerhorn; Anthropology, 306 Mines; Social and Economic Science, 301 Engineering; Physiology and Experimental Medicine, College of Physicians and Surgeons, West 59th Street. These meetings will be held at 11 o'clock, following the adjournment of the general session.

Luncheon. University Commons, Columbia University—table d'hôte, 30 cents, à la carte, 5 cents and upwards, 12 to 2 P.M.

Address of Vice-president W. S. Eichelberger, of the U. S. Naval Observatory, before the Section of Mathematics and Astronomy. Vice-president C. F. Mabery, Case School of Applied Science, on 'The Education of the Professional Chemist.' Vice-president William North Rice, Wesleyan University, on 'The Contributions of America to Geology.' Vice-president Henry B. Ward, University of Nebraska, on 'The Influence of Parasitism on the Host.' Vice-president Wm. T. Sedgwick on 'The Expansion of Physiology.' These addresses will be given at 2:30 P.M.

secure the program of the American Association, which will be distributed at Earl Hall on December 27, and the programs of the special societies in which they are interested.