

on the ground, among others, that the trading relations between the Chinese and the British empires are now based on these standards, which are, the petitioners contend, those in most general use in the commerce of the world.

WE learn from the London *Times* that the general purposes committee of the Birmingham Chamber of Commerce, having instituted an inquiry relative to the proposed compulsory adoption of the metric system, reports that opinion is divided on the question. The strongest opposition to compulsory adoption so far as the Birmingham and Midland district is concerned is to be found in the engineering trades. "It is stated," the committee reports, "that practically all engineering standards are based upon the inch, and it follows that all British-made ships, rolling stock, machinery gauges and tools, etc., are constructed according to these standards, the equivalents of which it is impossible to specify accurately in metrical measure. English-made machinery now in use in every part of the world made to our standard gauges on the interchangeable principle can have spare parts sent out of stock, but if any other standard is set up it would be necessary for the user of such machinery when ordering spare parts to specify whether the machinery was made before the passing of the proposed act, and would cause endless confusion and annoyance with customers at home and abroad." Whilst recognizing that the metric system is now much more widely used by traders in foreign transactions than was the case a few years ago, the committee seriously urge every trader interested in foreign trade to make use of the metric system wherever it may appear to be to his interest to do so. They are convinced that the commercial interests of the country will be much better served by gradual and voluntary adaptation than by legislation of a compulsory character.

UNIVERSITY AND EDUCATIONAL NEWS

TRINITY COLLEGE, Cambridge University, benefits to the extent of \$2,000,000 by the death of Lady Pearce. Her husband, Sir

William George Pearce, chairman of the Fairfield Shipbuilding and Engineering Company, died on November 2 last. By his will his fortune was bequeathed to Trinity College on the death of Lady Pearce.

LORD NEWLANDS has given £20,000 to Glasgow University for the establishment of scholarships to be held by students going from Glasgow University to Balliol College, Oxford.

M. THÉODORE VAUTIER has given 100,000 francs to the University of Lyons for research work in experimental physics.

MR. W. F. KING, boundary commissioner of Canada, has given to the geological laboratories of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology a valuable collection of rocks. The institution has further received from the estate of Caroline Whitney a seismograph, which for the present at least will be installed at the Blue Hill Observatory.

THE Administration Hall of the Oklahoma State University, erected about four years ago at a cost of \$85,000, was totally destroyed by fire on the afternoon of December 20. The flames started from the explosion of a gasoline stove in use on the roof by some workmen engaged in painting the dome. Arrangements are complete for the distribution among the other buildings of the classes affected, so that no recitation will be omitted on account of the fire. The records were saved and the loss on equipment was slight. By hard work the library building, and more especially Science Hall were saved without damage except slightly from water. The hall was insured for \$67,000, and rebuilding will begin at once.

THE Edward Davies Chemical Laboratories at Aberystwyth University College, the gift of the Llandinam family, have been opened by Mr. Asquith.

A CHAIR for photography is to be established in the Technical Institute at Dresden.

DR. WILLIAM H. WELKER, assistant in biological chemistry at Columbia University, has been appointed demonstrator of physiological chemistry at the University of Pennsylvania, where he succeeds Dr. P. B. Hawk.