

PRESIDENT TAFT'S MESSAGE

PARAGRAPHS of special interest to scientific men in President Taft's annual message to the congress concern the U. S. Naval Observatory and a Bureau of Health. They read as follows:

The generosity of Congress has provided in the present Naval Observatory the most magnificent and expensive astronomical establishment in the world. It is being used for certain naval purposes which might easily and adequately be subserved by a small division connected with the Navy Department at only a fraction of the cost of the present Naval Observatory. The official Board of Visitors established by Congress and appointed in 1901 expressed its conclusion that the official head of the observatory should be an eminent astronomer appointed by the President by and with the advice and consent of the Senate, holding his place by a tenure at least as permanent as that of the superintendent of the Coast Survey or the head of the Geological Survey, and not merely by a detail of two or three years' duration. I fully concur in this judgment and urge a provision by law for the appointment of such a director. It may not be necessary to take the observatory out of the Navy Department and put it into another department in which opportunity for scientific research afforded by the observatory would seem to be more appropriate, though I believe such a transfer in the long run is the best policy. I am sure, however, I express the desire of the astronomers and those learned in the kindred sciences when I urge upon Congress that the Naval Observatory be now dedicated to science under control of a man of science who can, if need be, render all the service to the Navy Department which this observatory now renders, and still furnish to the world the discoveries in astronomy that a great astronomer using such a plant would be likely to make.

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For a very considerable period a movement has been gathering strength, especially among the members of the medical profession, in favor of a concentration of the instruments of the national government which have to do with the promotion of public health. In the nature of things, the medical department of the army and the medical department of the navy must be kept separate. But there seems to be no reason why all the other bureaus and offices in the general government which have to do with the public health or subjects akin thereto should not be united in a bureau

to be called the Bureau of Public Health. This would necessitate the transfer of the Marine Hospital Service to such a bureau. I am aware that there is a wide field in respect to the public health committed to the states in which the federal government can not exercise jurisdiction, but we have seen in the Agricultural Department the expansion into widest usefulness of a department giving attention to agriculture when that subject is plainly one over which the states properly exercise direct jurisdiction. The opportunities offered for useful research and the spread of useful information in regard to the cultivation of the soil and the breeding of stock and the solution of many of the intricate problems in progressive agriculture have demonstrated the wisdom of establishing that department. Similar reasons, of equal force, can be given for the establishment of a Bureau of Health that shall not only exercise the police jurisdiction of the federal government respecting quarantine, but which shall also afford an opportunity for investigation and research by competent experts into questions of health affecting the whole country, or important sections thereof, questions which, in the absence of federal governmental work, are not likely to be promptly solved.

*THE GEORGE CROCKER SPECIAL
RESEARCH FUND*

By the will of the late George Crocker, of New York City, valuable property, said to be worth about \$1,500,000, has been bequeathed to Columbia University for researches on the cause, prevention and cure of cancer. The clause in the will relating to this bequest is as follows:

I order and direct my executors hereinafter named to sell my land, corner of Sixty-fourth Street and Fifth Avenue, in the Borough of Manhattan, City of New York, together with the house thereon, known as No. 1 East Sixty-fourth Street, and the contents thereof, as well as all my real estate at Darlington, in the County of Bergen, State of New Jersey, together with the houses thereon and the contents thereof, and the horses, cattle and other personal property connected therewith, and to convert the same into money and pay the net proceeds thereof to the trustees of Columbia College in the City of New York, to be held by such trustees and invested as a permanent fund, to be known as the "George Crocker Special Research Fund," the income of which shall be applied in such manner as said trustees may