

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.

* * * * *

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

from time to time determine in the prosecution of researches as to the cause, prevention and cure of cancer, and, should the progress of science at any time make the prosecution of further research in regard to cancer unnecessary, then the income of said fund may be used as said trustees may from time to time determine in the prosecution of other researches in medicine and surgery, and in the science allied thereto, with a view of preventing and curing diseases and of alleviating human suffering.

Provided, however, that no part of the principal or income of this fund shall be at any time used for the erection of a building.

CHANGES AT HARVARD COLLEGE

At a meeting of the Board of Overseers of Harvard College, held in Boston, December 8, 1909, the president of the university communicated the following votes of the faculty of arts and sciences modifying the choice of electives:

1. That a standing committee of nine, of which the president shall be chairman, be appointed from the faculty, with power to associate with itself a large number of advisers for students.
2. That the committee prepare general rules for the choice of electives, to be approved by the faculty, based upon the principle that a student must take a considerable amount of work in some one field, and that the rest of his courses must be well distributed.
3. That at the end of his first year in college each student be required to present to his adviser a plan of study for the remainder of his college course; and that the plan must conform to the general principles laid down by the committee, unless the committee is satisfied that the student is earnest and has sufficient grounds for departing from those principles.
4. That a student's plan be subsequently changed only for a cause satisfactory to the committee.

And after debate thereon, the board unanimously approved said votes, and authorized the carrying out of the same.

The president of the university communicated orally to the board the contemplated establishment by the corporation of a freshman dormitory, and explained the purpose and scope of the same, and after debate thereon, the board unanimously voted to ap-

prove the establishment of the said dormitory as contemplated by the corporation.

EDUCATION AT THE BOSTON MEETING OF THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION

MEMBERS of the American Association who are interested in education as well as in science will find much in the program of the Boston meeting to attract them. Because of the establishment of the section of education a number of educational interests are grouping themselves around the American Association, and this manifests itself in the program of the coming meeting by the fact that there are educational meetings scheduled for nearly every morning and afternoon of the session.

Section L itself will hold three sessions. The first of these on Tuesday afternoon will be devoted to the discussion of scientific problems in general education by members of the section. On Wednesday afternoon reports will be made by the General Education Board, the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and the Bureau of Education on their studies of the American college. At 4.30 on that day, Professor Dewey, the retiring vice-president, will deliver his address on "Science as a Method of Thinking and as Information in Education." On Thursday morning the committee on the Distribution of Students in Elective Courses will present its report.

The section will hold also two joint meetings; one on Tuesday morning, with the American Federation of the Teachers of the Mathematical and Natural Sciences, to which preliminary reports from several of the section committees of the International Commission on Teaching Mathematics will be presented and other topics of general interest to science teachers discussed. The other will be held on Wednesday morning with the Social Education Club of Boston and will be devoted to the discussion of the problem of social education.

Besides these meetings, a number of others have been arranged by the local associations of teachers and by other sections of the association. Section A will listen to a prelim-