

of technology. Mr. Carnegie's gifts to these institutions now amount to \$24,000,000.

By the will of former Judge John Forrest Dillon, Iowa State University receives \$10,000 and Iowa College and Cornell College, \$1,000 each.

AN additional gift of \$25,000 has been received by Oberlin College for carrying out the general building plans and the improvement of grounds.

THE alumni of the University of Illinois are planning to erect a \$150,000 building as a memorial to John Milton Gregory, first president of the university. It is to house an art collection gathered by Dr. Gregory and a new collection of figures and panels which the alumni association intends to buy.

THE Arnold Biological Laboratory, ground for which has been broken at Brown University, is expected to be finished a year from this summer. The building itself will cost \$80,000, while \$30,000 more will be spent upon the equipment.

THE Drapers' Company has made a grant of £200 a year for three years for anthropology at the University of Cambridge.

LAST year Sir William James Thomas, of Ynyshir, undertook to build and present to the University College of South Wales and Monmouthshire on a site contiguous to the old buildings in Newport Road a complete physiological department, so constructed as to form a part of a scheme for a complete medical school on the same site. Now, as we learn from *Nature*, a donor, who wishes at present to remain anonymous, has offered to build the whole of the buildings necessary not only for a medical school, but also a school of preventive medicine, at an estimated cost of £60,000. One of the conditions attached to the latter gift, however, is that the funds supplied by the treasury should be sufficient for the upkeep of the complete school.

CENTRAL Turkey College at Aintab has received from the Turkish government official recognition as *école supérieure*. It is the first of the American colleges in Turkey to secure

such authorization for any part of its regular curriculum.

MR. ALBERT L. BARROWS has been appointed instructor in zoology in the University of California.

DR. THOMAS H. MACBRIDE, professor of botany, has been appointed president of the Iowa State University by the State Board of Education.

#### DISCUSSION AND CORRESPONDENCE

##### THE ORGANIZATION OF A UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT

TO THE EDITOR OF SCIENCE: I have read with interest the letter of Professor F. L. Washburn on "Heads of Departments," in SCIENCE of May 1; and it has occurred to me that your readers might be interested in an account of the present organization of one of the largest departments in one of the largest universities in America.

At Columbia University a department of English was first established in 1899 by assigning to it the professor of English literature, the professor of dramatic literature and the professor of rhetoric and English composition; and these three thereupon organized by inviting the professor of English in Teachers College to join them and by electing the professor of English literature as chairman and the professor of rhetoric as secretary. On the death of the professor of English literature, the late Thomas R. Price, the position of chairman was abolished, the senior professor of the department being expected to preside at its meetings and all the administrative duties being confided to the secretary, who was relieved of a part of his teaching that he might be enabled to carry this extra burden.

With the expansion of Columbia University and of its several colleges and schools, Columbia College, Barnard, Teachers and the School of Journalism, the department of English has grown in numbers; and several years ago the department of comparative literature was merged with it, so that it now consists of more than twenty professors, assistant professors and associate professors. And during the past fifteen years it has administered its

own affairs in town-meeting, so to speak, as an absolute democracy, in which every member has an equal voice. It has made all nominations; it has recommended all promotions; and it has requested all increase of salary; and in every case its nominations and recommendations have been favorably received by the president and by the trustees, who have granted all our requests—excepting only those not at the moment financially advisable.

Almost every member of the department serves on one or more of the special committees, to whom we confide the oversight of our several activities. Whenever we have felt the need of developing instruction in any part of our field, we have never had to draft a man for service, for all have been ready to volunteer for duty. As a result of this harmony every part of our work—graduate and undergraduate, in college and in school, and in the extension courses—has been coordinated in response to our individual and united understanding of the demands of the occasion. And so complete is this harmony, that since the department was established, no action of any kind has been taken and no recommendation has been made, other than by a unanimous vote.

BRANDER MATTHEWS

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY,  
IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK,  
May 14, 1914

#### THE NEW FUR SEAL INVESTIGATION

THE present Commissioner of Fisheries and Secretary of Commerce, having grown distrustful of past investigators, have arranged for a new fur-seal commission for the season of 1914. To those who have followed the fur-seal situation in the past few years this is a disappointment, delaying as it does for one season more the emancipation of the herd. Without wishing to prejudice the work of the new commission, but in simple justice to those whose work is thus put on trial, it seems fair to point out certain phases of the situation which confronts the new investigators.

By the law of 1912 commercial killing of fur seals is prohibited for five years. The object of any investigation at the present time

must be to determine the wisdom or unwisdom, the necessity or lack of necessity, of this law. In effect the law was condemned eighteen years ago by the joint commission of American and British experts of 1896-7. The following words from the ninth paragraph of their joint agreement are worth quoting:

The methods of driving and killing practised on the islands, as they have come under our observation during the past two seasons, call for no criticism or objection. An adequate supply of bulls is present on the rookeries; the number of older bachelors rejected in the drives during the period in question is such as to safeguard in the immediate future a similarly adequate supply; the breeding bulls, females, and pups on the breeding grounds are not disturbed; there is no evidence or sign of impairment of virility of males; the operations of driving and killing are conducted skillfully and without inhumanity.

This very positive conclusion was reached after two seasons of thorough study, involving the observation and inspection of drives aggregating 150,000 animals, 50,000 of which were killed. The commission of 1914 will have no opportunity whatever to observe the normal methods of land sealing, the law preventing it. The commission of 1896-7 had opportunity to carefully weigh and consider the action of pelagic sealing, in its judgment the sole cause of the herd's decline, determining the proportion of pregnant and nursing females in the catch on board the sealing vessels and observing the starvation of the dependent young on land. The new commission is entirely cut off from this source of information, the treaty of 1911 having suspended pelagic sealing. The new commission can obtain definite information from the rookeries of the present condition of the herd, but it will have no basis of comparison arising from previous experience, and can not, therefore, of itself determine whether the herd is increasing or diminishing.

Another difficulty confronts the new commission. It is said to "have been selected by outside agencies and to have no previous connection with the fur seal controversy." In other words it is a non-partisan commission.