duction of the primitive art motif into modern designing.

Dr. Spinden will begin forwarding specimens to New York as soon after his arrival in the field as possible. He will start in Guatemala and extend his investigations to western Honduras, Salvador and Nicaragua. In these localities are small groups of Indians most interesting for their civilization and culture, although comparatively little known. Dr. Spinden will not only obtain examples of designs but will also learn the details of the art of weaving and study the dyestuffs used by the native artisans. The costumes worn by the Indians of Central American countries are not only picturesque, but have many details of construction which might be successfully adapted. The fundamental ideas on which these garments are based are said to be unique.

Dr. Spinden will also get all possible information concerning the native food products with a view to calling attention to their economic value, which is often very great. Specimens of these alimentary substances will be collected for display in the Preparedness Exhibit which the American Museum now has under way. Dr. Spinden will be accompanied by S. G. Morley, of the Carnegie Institution of Washington, who is likewise interested in the archeological features of the expedition. The work is undertaken with the official sanction of all the Central American governments. Most of the traveling will be on mule back through mountainous and sparsely settled regions and over native trails. Dr. Spinden left New York on April 16 and expects to return in about three months.

RESEARCH WORK OF THE LEANDER McCORMICK OBSERVATORY

THE visiting committee of the Leander McCormick Observatory of the University of Virginia met in Washington on April 17. The director reported that the scientific work accomplished during the year was as follows:

1. The determination of the parallax of fifty stars, results thus having been obtained on one hundred and twenty-five stars since the parallax work was started two and a half years ago. A preliminary value of the parallax of Barnard's star of large proper motion was found to be 0″.47.

2. More than 10,000 observations of meteors were made by amateurs during the year 1916, and were sent in to the McCormick Observatory for discussion and publication. This probably makes the largest number of meteor observations ever collected in any one year, except perhaps during the years of a meteor shower.

3. A plan of cooperation has been entered into with Harvard College Observatory whereby the 26-inch refractor is to be used for the visual observation of variable stars while they are at minima. More than one hundred and fifty stars are on the program, these stars being mainly long period variables.

4. Photographs have been made with an objective grating and with yellow light in order to find the photovisual magnitudes of the Harvard Standard regions.

5. Micrometric measures by C. P. Olivier of two hundred double stars have been published in the *Astronomical Journal.*

Grateful acknowledgment was expressed for financial assistance from the Leander McCormick estate, from the special Adams fellowship from Columbia University for parallax work, from the J. Lawrence Smith fund of the National Academy of Sciences for research on meteors, and for the gift of a wireless apparatus and a computing machine from Mr. John Neilson, of New York.

THE ENGINEERING COMMITTEE OF THE NATIONAL RESEARCH COUNCIL

THE following engineering committee has been appointed: George F. Swain and Edgar C. Marburg (representing American Society of Civil Engineers), Pope Yeatman and Albert Sauveur (representing American Institute of Mining Engineers), C. D. Young and William F. Durand (representing American Society of Mechanical Engineers), Frank B. Jewett and Clayton H. Sharp (representing American Institute of Electrical Engineers), Lewis B. Stillwell (representing American Institute of Consulting Engineers), John A. Brashear, George K. Burgess, J. J. Carty, Howard E. Coffin, John R. Freeman, Hollis Godfrey,

W. F. M. Goss, Clemens Hershel, M. I. Pupin, Charles F. Rand, C. E. Skinner, S. W. Stratton, Ambrose Swasey, Elihu Thomson.

Previous to the appointment of this committee the following letter, dated April 18, 1917, was addressed to the presidents of the American Societies of Civil, Electrical, Mechanical and Mining Engineers:

The National Research Council desires to increase its means of serving the government in support of National Defense by enlisting through an engineering committee the services of a group of distinguished engineers drawn from the field of engineering research in each of the four main divisions of civil, mining, mechanical and electrical engineering.

The members of this committee would deal directly with engineering research problems falling within the spheres of their experience, and would serve as representatives of their respective national engineering societies for the calling upon other members of those societies for the services which the societies have offered to the government in connection with problems of defense and other problems that have been referred to the National Research Council.

The National Research Council operates through a number of central committees covering the physical sciences, medicine, hygiene, agriculture and other subjects as described in the pamphlet, enclosed herewith, which gives the scheme of organization of the council as developed up to January 15, 1917.

The engineering committee is a central committee coordinate with the other central committees therein listed.

In addition to services in the field of engineering research the council has need of some general engineering services auxiliary to problems of research, and desires to be in a position to enlist such services in support of the general objects of the council.

These objects are, to bring into cooperation existing governmental, educational, industrial and other research organizations with the purpose of encouraging the investigation of natural phenomena, the increased use of scientific research in the development of American industries, the employment of scientific methods in strengthening the national defense, and such other applications of science as will promote the national security and welfare.

The relation of the National Research Council to The Engineering Foundation is described in enclosed report by the secretary of The Engineering Foundation.

The relation of the National Research Council to the Council of National Defense is indicated by the following resolution, passed on the 21st of February, by the Council of National Defense:

Resolved, that the Council of National Defense, recognizing that the National Research Council, at the request of the President of the United States has organized the scientific forces of the country in the interest of National Defense and National welfare, requests that the National Research Council cooperate with it in matters pertaining to scientific research for National Defense and to this end the Council of National Defense suggests that the National Research Council appoint a committee of not more than three, at least one of whom shall be located in Washington, for the purpose of maintaining active relations with the director of the Council of National Defense.

The executive committee of the National Research Council would appreciate it if on behalf of the American Institute of Electrical Engineers you would designate two engineers skilled in engineering research, whom the committee may appoint members of the engineering committee of the National Research Council, to render the services outlined in this communication and to serve as a means of calling upon other members of the American Institute of Electrical Engineers for services that the National Research Council may need in support of the national objects herein referred to.

GEORGE E. HALE,
Chairman, National Research Council,
JOHN J. CARTY,
Chairman, Executive Committee,
GANO DUNN,
Chairman, Engineering Committee

MEDICAL STUDENTS AND THE WAR

THE Medical School Committee of the Medical Board of the Council of National Defense has made the following report:

In your effort to solve the urgent problem before this board and assist the surgeon general in supplying an adequate number of medical officers for the Army and Navy, it is important that this country should not repeat England's blunder at the outbreak of the war in permitting the disorganization of the medical schools either by calling the faculties into active service or sanctioning the enlistment of medical students into any of the line organizations. Ordinary foresight demands that we face the possibility that the war upon which we