

DR. GEORGE BARGER has been appointed to the chair of chemistry in connection with medicine at Edinburgh University. Dr. Barger is at present research chemist to the Medical Research Committee, National Health Insurance.

At the University of Cambridge Mr. Joseph Barcroft, F.R.S., of King's College, has been appointed reader in physiology; Mr. A. V. Hill, F.R.S., of King's College, university lecturer in physiology, and Dr. Hartridge, of Kings College, university lecturer in the physiology of the senses.

## DISCUSSION AND CORRESPONDENCE

### PATENT REFORM PROSPECTS

A *Report of the Patent Committee* of the National Research Council, recommending *inter alia*, (1) the separation of the Patent Office from the Department of the Interior, (2) the creation of a single Court of Patent Appeals, to be located in Washington, and (3) certain salary readjustments, is being printed in the March issue of the *Journal of the Patent Office Society*—of which additional contents are as follows: "The Patent Office from 1828 to 1836" (a historical article), by W. J. Wyman; "A United States Patent Commission" (preferring a commission to a commissioner), by John Boyle; "A Proposed Reorganization of the Examining Corps" (advocating the grouping of related divisions into "departments," to be supervised by the respective members of a strengthened board), by Bert Russell; "Art Classification of Patents for Patent Office Use" (favoring reliance on analogies of structure and function), by G. A. Lovett.

It is understood that the matters referred to in the above-mentioned report are but initial measures and that the Patent Committee has been continued, to press for necessary legislation.

At a meeting of the Patent Office Society on February 17, the following resolution was taken with reference to the proposed separation: That the Patent Office Society approve, and support by all proper means, both as an organization and as individuals, that National

Research Council bill which provides for the establishment of the Patent Office as a separate institution, independent of the Interior Department and of every other existing department of the government. The discussion of the foregoing resolution included no single word of disesteem toward Secretary Lane, under whose jurisdiction the office now is.

Dr. Geo. E. Hale, chairman of the Council, in an address to the Patent Office Society on March 3, 1919, stated the present personnel of the council's enlarged Advisory Committee on Industrial Research, including many well-known leaders in the industrial world. Dr. Hale deprecated the impracticable distinction between "pure" and "applied" science, and emphasized again, even in connection with industrial advance, the importance of what he preferred to call the fundamental sciences.

Because Dr. Hale had also stressed the importance of those cross connections for which the Research Council aims to provide, associating the various groups of specialists now at work in diversified and somewhat isolated fields, and because of the prospect of a continued activity on the part of the Patent Committee as above referred to, this latest announcement was construed by Dr. Hale's hearers as justifying the hope of some very real and general cooperative effort toward the establishment of a patent system that shall in fact do its proper part—nationally and perhaps internationally—"to promote the progress of science and the useful arts."

BERT RUSSELL

### A STANDARD SCIENTIFIC ALPHABET

TO THE EDITOR OF SCIENCE: May I call the attention of Mr. J. C. Ruppenthal whose letter on, "A Standard Scientific Alphabet" appeared in SCIENCE for February 21, 1919, pp. 191-192, to the International Phonetic Association.

Its secretary, just before the war, was Paul Passy, its address, 20 rue de la Madeleine, Bourg La-Reine, Seine, France; its organ, *Le Maître Phonétique*. It had about 1,800 members and it has adopted an International alphabet which can be used for all languages