

of school work in the respective subject. Furthermore, these societies have frequently been recognized as of public utility by the government. The Department of Agriculture, for example, grants special leave to its employees in order that they may attend the meetings of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. The War Department, to cite another instance, has detailed officers to attend the meetings of the American Historical Association and of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

The assistant director of railroads writes:

In view of the arguments presented by you for favorable action it seems appropriate to set before you the considerations that prompted the government to grant reduced rates for conventions. It was a very serious question whether the government would be justified in putting them into effect at all. Past experience has shown that as a whole such reduced fares have operated to reduce railroad revenues and to increase the cost of transportation because the giving of them encouraged people who were planning to make business trips to adjust their trips so as to take advantage of the reduction. This resulted in diminishing the amount of travel, and consequently increasing its cost, prior to the time such reduced fares were put into effect, and in congesting the travel during the time such reduced fares were in effect, thereby increasing the cost during that period also. In the present time, when railroad costs just as all other industrial costs are exceedingly high, it seemed clear that the government would not be justified in putting into effect reduced rates which would result in an important diminution in the net earnings received from the business. On the other hand, it was deemed desirable to encourage the attendance at certain conventions and to afford to persons who wished to attend them and who would be unable to go except for reduced rates the opportunity to do so. The classes of conventions decided upon were religious, charitable, fraternal, military and educational. This classification was adopted with a full realization of the difficulties which would result and that the action might be considered an arbitrary one. It was felt, however, that it was based upon sound grounds and, under all the circumstances, is consistent and defensible. It was plain that the term "educational" taken in its broad sense could be construed to cover a very large number of conventions. For example, those of doctors, lawyers, dentists, business colleges, etc. It was, therefore, necessary to restrict its definition, and this was done by confining it to those con-

ventions having to do with elementary education, such as meetings of school teachers, and among these meetings was included the National Educational Association.

#### THE ST. LOUIS MEETINGS OF THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE

The announcement sent out from the office of the permanent secretary of the American Association for the Advancement of Science says:

The American Association for the Advancement of Science and many national scientific societies affiliated with it will hold its seventy-second meeting in St. Louis, from December 29, 1919, to January 3, 1920, under the auspices of the educational institutions of the city. All meetings will be held in the Soldan High School, corner Union Boulevard and Kensington Avenue. Dr. Simon Flexner, of the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research, will preside. The address of the retiring president will be given by Dr. John Merle Coulter, of the University of Chicago, at the opening general session of the association, and will be followed by an informal reception to members of the association and of the affiliated societies.

This seventy-second meeting of the American Association, which was established in 1848, will be marked by the importance of its program and by the increased interest manifested in all branches of the natural and the applied sciences. It will embrace a program devoted very largely to definite working problems of reconstruction. When the association last met in St. Louis, fifteen years ago, the membership of the association was only 4,000. The membership of the association at present numbers nearly 15,000 and the coming meeting will be one of the most important gatherings of scientific men hitherto held in this country or elsewhere.

The occasion should be taken to strengthen the association and its work in the central states, which have in recent years assumed such leadership in scientific research. We may be sure that the scientific men of Washington University and the city of St. Louis will do their part. It would be well if the meetings might be celebrated by affiliation with the association of the strong state and city academies of the central states and the organization of a central branch of the association on the lines that have proved so successful on the Pacific coast.