

DR. WILLIAM CURTIS FARABEE gave an address on "Ethnography at the Peace Conference" before the University of Pennsylvania chapter of Phi Beta Kappa at its twentieth anniversary meeting on April 15. At the same meeting Dr. Farabee was elected to honorary membership in the society.

DR. FRED HEYL, of the Upjohn Company, Kalamazoo, Michigan, recently lectured before the chemical department of Yale University on "The application of organic chemistry in the pharmaceutical industry." The next speaker in this course of industrial lectures being given this year in the Graduate School will be Mr. Walter S. Landis, of the American Cyanamide Company, who will give three lectures dealing with the "Fixation of nitrogen."

THE Lady Priestley Memorial Lecture of the National Health Society was given by Sir George Newman, K.C.B., M.D., F.R.C.P., on Thursday, April 22, at the house of the Royal Society of Medicine. The title of the lecture is "Preventive medicine: the importance of an educated public opinion."

PLANS have been made for an expenditure of about \$10,000,000 for the establishment of "a medical center" at Walter Reed General Hospital, Washington, D. C. The hospital is to be gradually developed into one of the main hospitals of the Army, by the building of two additions to the main hospital building for various uses such as medical and surgical wards, dental department, laboratory, eye, ear and throat department and dispensary. Most of these activities now are housed in temporary buildings. The Mayo Brothers, of Rochester, Minn., will assist in the approved project for increasing its usefulness on modern lines.

THE Migratory Bird Act of 1918, designed to carry out provisions of a treaty between the United States and Great Britain for the protection of migratory birds, has been held constitutional by the Supreme Court. The statute was attacked by Missouri authorities, who alleged that it interfered with the sovereignty of the state and with the property right of the people of that state.

EDUCATIONAL NOTES AND NEWS

THE General Education Board has contributed \$350,000 to the Endowment Fund of New York University, to endow the work in engineering and collegiate work. It is conditional on the raising of a total fund for these purposes of \$1,200,000 and the clearing off of the floating indebtedness of the university, now amounting to approximately \$400,000.

ANNOUNCEMENT is made of the establishment in the Yale Graduate School for the year 1920-1921 of a research fellowship in organic chemistry by the National Aniline and Chemical Company of New York. This fellowship is supported by a gift of \$750, and the recipient must be a candidate for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

THE total civil service estimates of the year in Great Britain are put at £557,474,899. One of the largest increases is for the Board of Education. The following are typical increases:

	Estimated for 1920-21 £	Granted for 1919-20 £
Board of Education ..	45,755,567	32,853,111
British Museum	294,233	219,714
Scientific investigation, etc.	208,416	113,974
Scientific and Industrial Research	518,298	242,815
Public Education in Scotland	6,877,220	4,677,220

A ROYAL Commission has been appointed to inquire into the financial resources and working of the University of Dublin and Trinity College, Dublin. The commission is to consider the application for state financial help which has been made by the university. It will consist of five members with three as a quorum. The names of those appointed are: Sir Archibald Giekie, O.M., K.C.B., F.R.S.; Sir John Ross, Bt., Judge of the Chancery Division of the High Court of Justice in Ireland; Dr. A. E. Shipley, D.Sc., F.R.S., Master of Christ's College, Cambridge; Professor J. S. E. Townsend, F.R.S., Wykeham professor of physics and fellow of New College, Oxford; and Professor John Joly, F.R.S., professor of

geology and mineralogy in the University of Dublin. Professor Gilbert Waterhouse, LL.D., professor of German in Dublin University, is to be the secretary to the commission. The commission will investigate the administration of the existing financial resources, and also the constitution both of the university and of Trinity College, and may make interim reports if it wishes to do so.

DR. L. D. COFFMAN, head of the department of education at the University of Minnesota, has been elected president of the university to succeed Dr. Marion L. Burton, who is president-elect of the University of Michigan.

THE trustees of the Peking Union Medical College, Peking, China, announce the resignation of Dr. Franklin C. McLean as director of the college, and the appointment of Dr. Henry S. Houghton, formerly dean of the Harvard Medical School of China, at Shanghai, as acting director. Dr. McLean retires from the directorship in order to devote himself to the professional work of the department of medicine of the Peking College of which he is professor and head.

DR. LAWSON G. LOWERY, for three years chief medical officer of the Boston Psychopathic Hospital, has been appointed assistant professor in the psychopathic hospital of the University of Iowa.

DR. J. B. CLELAND has been appointed to the newly created chair of pathology in the Adelaide University, South Australia.

DISCUSSION AND CORRESPONDENCE

UNIFICATION OF SYMBOLS AND DIAGRAMS

THE recent attempts to unify the mathematical symbols used in physics and chemistry are probably approved, in principle, by practically every one. They have stimulated and guided a large amount of voluntary effort and cooperation. Their complete recognition and adoption has been hindered by the difficulty of getting any one system to satisfy the very varied requirements and personal preferences involved.

These two facts suggest, first, a further field for the applying of unifying methods,

and second, an advantageous way of making the application. The field is the great number of special or minor subjects; such as electron tubes, radio work, gas theory, calorimetry. The notations used in most of these would be better if more nearly unified; and this could much more easily be brought about if each subject is treated as deserving a notation of its own, founded on the general scheme, but having also a special development. Such a treatment of the special topics would probably help solve the conflicts which impede the general scheme also.

A possible advantageous method of getting the work done is for the committees in charge to act more or less as referees, allowing the authors of new papers to do a good deal of the work and even to furnish much of the initiative. Most scientific workers seem to be strongly of the opinion that unification in these numerous subjects is desirable, but among those who would most naturally be expected to take the lead there is a lively appreciation of the work and difficulties involved. These obstacles should be diminished by the plan here suggested. It really puts the committee in a position just opposite to that which similar committees have usually held. Instead of canvassing the whole field and submitting a complete system to be judged by others, the committee would have the final judgment, and the constructive part would be done mainly by active workers specially interested in each different subject, and specially familiar with it. It might be that each decision of the committee, like the decision of a court, would apply to a single case submitted to it, that is, to a single paper. Frequently, then, a brief might be submitted by the author, giving reasons for the desired selection of symbols, and some review of those used by previous writers in the same subject and in those allied to it. The method would thus be flexible and the results capable of modification, though as a rule after one important paper had been passed upon there would be very little more work for the committee in that particular subject.

Whether any such general plan as that just