## SCIENTIFIC NOTES AND NEWS

Dr. Edward Rhodes Stitt, head of the Naval Medical School at Washington, D. C., has been appointed Surgeon General of the Navy, to succeed Surgeon General Braisted who retired on November 26.

Dr. Whitman Cross, of the U. S. Geological Survey, has been appointed honorary associate in petrology at the National Museum, succeeding the late Dr. J. P. Iddings.

Dr. C. L. Alsberg, chief of the Bureau of Chemistry, U. S. Department of Agriculture, was elected president of the Association of American Dairy Food and Drug Officials at the recent convention of the Association at St. Louis.

In the issue of Science for November 26 (p. 505), Dr. I. C. White should have been given as president of the Geological Society of America.

Arrangements have been made by the faculty and trustees of the University of Chicago for the painting of the official portrait of James Rowland Angell, formerly dean of the faculties and head of the department of psychology at the university, who is now head of the Carnegie Corporation of New York. Mr. Ralph Clarkson, the Chicago painter who made the highly successful portraits of Professor Thomas C. Chamberlin, former head of the department of geology, and Professor Rollin D. Salisbury, dean of the Ogden Graduate School of Science, has been engaged to paint Mr. Angell's portrait and is now in New York for that purpose. Dean Angell was connected with the University of Chicago for twenty-five years.

Dr. B. Laufer, curator of anthropology in the Field Museum of Chicago, was elected an honorary member of the Finnish Archeological Society of Helsingfors on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of this society on November 6, 1920, and a corresponding member of the Société des Amis de l'Art Asiatique, Hague, Holland. He has recently been appointed honorary curator of Chinese antiquities in the Art Institute of Chicago.

The recipient of the Alvarenga prize awarded by the Swedish Medical Association this year was Dr. E. Hammarsten for his work describing the isolation from the pancreas of a "coupled" nucleic acid.

Dr. C. M. Woodworth, who has been making a study of the inheritance of disease resistance in flax with the Office of Cereal Investigations, U. S. Department of Agriculture, with headquarters at Madison, Wisconsin, has resigned to take charge of the plant breeding work in the agronomy department of the University of Illinois.

Dr. Carl O. Johns, chief of the color laboratory at the Bureau of Chemistry, U. S. Department of Agriculture, resigned in November to become director of a newly-established department of general research for the Standard Oil Company of New Jersey.

Dr. Swarna Kumer Mitra, B.S., M.S. (California), Ph.D. (Ohio State), a native Hindu from Calcutta, has been appointed in the Imperial Agricultural Department of India as provisional economic botanist of Assam. Dr. Mitra sails for India early in January.

We learn from the *Journal* of the Washington Academy of Sciences that Mr. H. Pittier, of the U. S. Department of Agriculture, who is at present in Venezuela, will accompany a party of Swiss engineers who are expected in Venezuela in January for the purpose of investigating doubtful points of the Venezuela-Colombia boundary as recently arbitrated by the King of Spain. The commission will traverse the territory extending from a point on the Rio Meta to the headwaters of the Guainiia in the Rio Negro basin, a region which has probably never been visited by naturalists.

Professor Simon H. Gage spoke on November 30 before the Cornell University chapter of the Society of Sigma Xi at its first public lecture of the year. He described his recent investigations on the determination of the digestion and assimilation of fatty foods by a study of the blood with the dark-field microscope.

Baron Gerard de Geer addressed the Geological Society of Boston on November 30, on

"Spitzbergen as the key to the relation between northern Europe and North America."

THE department of physics of the Carnegie Institute of Technology recently held an evening session of its physics colloquium, at which more than a hundred guests, largely engineers and scientific men of the district, were present. The speakers of the occasion were Dr. Heber D. Curtis, the newly appointed director of the Allegheny Observatory, and Dr. Keivin Burns, astronomer. Dr. Curtis spoke on "Future work on the Einstein theory." Dr. Burn's subject was "The stars and physics."

DR. H. DESLANDRES, president of the Paris Academy of Sciences, gave, at the meeting on October 4, an *éloge* on Sir Norman Lockyer, who was a correspondent of the academy in the section of astronomy.

THE death is announced at the age of seventy-six years of Dr. Théodore Flournoy, formerly professor of physiology and psychology at the University of Geneva.

THE second annual meeting of the Mineralogical Society of America will take place in Chicago, on December 29, 1920. By a recent vote of the Geological Society of America, the Mineralogical Society of America was closely affiliated with it.

AT the Chicago meetings papers on genetical subjects will be presented at the Wednesday morning session of the Botanical Society of America, and at the Wednesday afternoon session of the American Society of Zoologists. These two sessions, together with the meetings of the American Society of Naturalists on Thursday and Friday, provide a nearly continuous program for those interested primarily in genetics and evolution. The annual dinner of the naturalists will be held Thursday evening, at the Hotel Sherman. At the close of the dinner Dr. Jacques Loeb will deliver the presidential address, "On Osmosis." A smoker for all biologists will be held Tuesday evening in the social rooms of Ida Noyes Hall, following the address of Professor W. M. Wheeler, retiring vice-president of the American Association and chairman of Section F.

A SPECIAL attraction to members of the association, and to others in attendance at Chicago will be an exceptionally interesting exhibit and working demonstration showing the apparatus and scientific principles upon which the wireless telephone is based. This collection of working models has been designed to reproduce the more fundamental discoveries in unapplied science which have paved the way for the wireless telephone and without which this great practical achievement could not have been realized. The exhibit comprises many exceedingly ingenious and spectacular automatically demonstrating models. It is especially valuable as a concrete illustration of the manner in which abstract scientific study has always had to precede practical achievements. The history of the wireless telephone as here set forth emphasizes a great principle of human progress, that the abstract scientist and reclusive philosopher of one generation prepares the way for the technician of the next; the scientific laboratory of one generation becomes the workshop of the next; the "useless theory" of one is the practise of the next. The exhibit has been prepared by the American Telephone and Telegraph Company and by the Western Electric Company, under the auspices of the National Research Council, and it has been made possible to have it at Chicago for the association meeting through the efforts of Dr. Vernon Kellogg, permanent secretary of the National Research Council, and of Dr. H. E. Howe, chairman of research extension of the council. The exhibit may be inspected at the Chicago Art Institute (Michigan Avenue near the Van Buren Street Station of the Illinois Central Railway).

THE Austin Section of the Southwestern Geological Society meets at the University of Texas, Austin, on the first Friday night of each month. The program for the present session is as follows:

October 1, 1920: F. B. Plummer, "Oil structures in the great basin of Utah."

November 5, 1920: J. W. Beede, "Geology of the Mackenzie River district."

December 3, 1920: Ira Edwards, "Geological field work in Wisconsin."

January 7, 1921: W. S. Adkins, "The Solitario."

February 4, 1921: H. P. Bybee, "The Hewitt, Oklahoma, oil field."

March 4, 1921: R. A. Liddle, "Faulting and structure in Medina County, Texas."

In an editorial note *Nature* says: There can be no doubt that scientific progress in relation to agriculture has been seriously hampered in the past by the poor material prospects offered to the scientific worker, and the Ministry of Agriculture, in recognizing the fact and in attempting to remove the defect, has shown a spirit of enlightened goodwill which is of hopeful augury. The provision of a grant earmarked to cover the salaries of workers in universities and in institutions such as the Rothamsted Experimental Station, in addition to, and separate from, a grant for laboratory and general research expenses, is a real effort to ensure that the workers shall have some security of tenure and some prospect of a settled career in the prosecution of research. The principle is sound, but the practical application is as yet not entirely successful. A system of grading the workers is perhaps inevitable, and the salaries allotted to the different grades are in some respects not reasonable. But the annual increments are too small, espceially during the years when the average worker is marrying and his expenses are increasing, and there is not sufficient range between the extremes of the scale, *e.g.*, a worker recently graduated and beginning his career receives £450; the same man ten years later, with a wife, two or more children, and a position to maintain, receives only twice that amount, and is actually worse off than before. The total number of graded posts is much too small even to cover only those already working in agricultural research. That will, no doubt, be improved as time goes on, but meanwhile it leads to stagnant promotion and invidious selection. There must be something seriously at fault when (to take only one particular instance) a worker of more than thirteen years' experience in research, of acknowledged eminence and authority in an important subject, should be offered, and have in the meantime to accept, a post in the third grade (called "junior assistants"), and be classed along with those at the start of their career with no record of solid achievement behind them.

According to the Dublin correspondent of the *Christian Science Monitor* the nineteenth annual report of the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction for Ireland has just been issued showing how its annual income of £190,000 has been spent. Agricultural purposes alone absorb £124,000 of this, £55,000 being reserved for technical instruction, and £10,000 for fisheries. During the academic year 1918–1919, 258 students attended the Royal College of Science. In addition to these there were three research students. As a result of the war there was a temporary decline in the attendance of readers at the National Library of Ireland. Many valuable additions have been made to this library. Visits to the Museum of Science and Art showed an increase from the previous year of neary 24,000 and many of these were serious students. There is a growing demand for homegrown timber, consequent on the reduction of supplies from abroad during the war, which demonstrates the inadequate provision hitherto made for the encouragement of forestry. The reconstructive committee, therefore, has turned its attention in this direction and the result of an investigation has been given effect to in the Forestry Act which came into force on September 1, 1919. The Forestry Act provides for the formation of a forestry fund amounting to £3,500,000 during the next ten years and the appointment of eight commissioners whose duty it will be to promote the interest of forestry and its developments, and the production and supply of timber. The powers and duties of the Agricultural Department are to be transferred to these commissioners. To assist them in their duties under the act provision is made for the appointment of four consultative committees, one of which will deal with Ireland.