

The oceanographic committee will remain in existence with a watching and organizing brief ready to revive the project whenever a favorable opportunity arises, and the council will doubtless report upon the whole matter to the meeting of the general committee of the association at Edinburgh next September. It is hoped that the proposed expedition is postponed only for a season, and that the interval may be usefully employed in perfecting plans and making other essential preparations.

#### THE NOLAN PATENT OFFICE BILL

THE American Engineering Council of the Federated American Engineering Societies will seek at the opening of the special session of Congress to have the Nolan Patent Office Bill passed.

Failure of the measure in the last session is attributed to the presence of the Federal Trade Commission section which Edwin J. Prindle, of New York, chairman of the American Engineering Council's Patents Committee in a report to L. W. Wallace, executive secretary of the council, asserts should not be enacted into law in any form even as a separate bill. The committee reports:

The bill for the imperatively necessary relief of the Patent Office, after passing the House of Representatives with satisfactory provisions for the Patent Office, failed to pass the Senate at the session just closed with those same provisions, solely because of the presence in it of an unrelated section known as the Federal Trade Commission Section.

The former opposition in the Senate to the Patent Office relief and that which forced the unacceptable reductions in salaries and numbers of examiners and clerks (which the Conference Committee was persuaded to set aside) is largely and seemingly almost wholly overcome. But the opposition in the Senate to the Federal Trade Section is determined and has expressed an intention to prevent the Patent Office from getting the desired relief unless the Federal Trade Section is removed from the bill.

More than preventing the Patent Office relief, however, the Federal Trade Section is believed to be a dangerous measure in itself. It provides that the Federal Trade Commission may receive assignments of and administer inventions and pat-

ents from governmental employees and is an entering wedge for further legislation to empower the Trade Commission to receive patents from non-governmental inventors or owners.

An exclusive license would have to be granted, at least for a few years, to induce any one to undertake the almost always necessary development expense, and the Trade Commission would surely be charged with favoritism in granting such a license. In order to protect its licensees, the Trade Commission would have to sue infringers, a most unfortunate activity for the government. The industries would close their doors to the government employees fearing to disclose to them their secrets or unpatented inventions, and research by the industries would be discouraged for fear that government employees, using government facilities, might reach the result first and patent it.

#### THE AMERICAN PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

THE American Philosophical Society will hold its general meeting in the hall of the society on Independence Square on April 21, 22 and 23. The program includes the following discussions:

The Application of the Method of the Interferometer to certain Astronomical Researches:

To astrophysical problems: HENRY NORRIS RUSSELL, Ph.D., professor of astronomy, Princeton University.

To the measurement of double stars: FRANK SCHLESINGER, Ph.D., director, Yale University Observatory.

To the determination of stellar parallaxes: JOHN A. MILLER, Ph.D., director, Sproul Observatory, Swarthmore, Pa.

Atomic structure:

DAVID WEBSTER, professor of physics, Leland Stanford University.

WILLIAM DUANE, director of radium institute, Harvard Medical School, Boston.

BERGEN DAVIS, professor of physics, Columbia University.

On Friday evening there will be a reception in the hall of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, when Dr. James H. Breasted, professor of Egyptology and Oriental history, University of Chicago, will speak on "Following the trail of our earliest ancestors" illustrated by lantern slides.

Award will be made of the society's Henry M. Phillips Prize of two thousand dollars for