

The chemical and the histological work still remained to be done.

J. A. Ambler, of the Color Laboratory of the Department of Agriculture, with the approval of Dr. Ball, offered the resources of this laboratory to help in the work and undertake to make chemical analyses of samples that had already been tested by the Society of American Bacteriologists.

Drs. McClung, Harper and Hazen stated that some of the samples which were very satisfactory to bacteriologists did not give good results in cytological or histological staining, and agreed that considerable work was necessary to standardize the stains for this purpose. They offered to take steps to secure the active interest of their respective societies in this. It was pointed out that the zoologists had already appointed Dr. S. I. Kornhauser to assist in the work and that Dr. Victor C. Vaughan as chairman of the Division of Medicine had given assurance of the interest and support of that profession. Drs. Harper and McClung were appointed to act as a temporary committee with Dr. H. J. Conn on the organization of further plans including the nomination of a standing committee to the National Research Council. Such a committee has since been authorized to function under the Division of Biology and Agriculture, with the Division of Medicine cooperating, the membership of which is: H. J. Conn, Geneva, N. Y. (Chairman); S. I. Kornhauser, Denison University; L. W. Sharp, Cornell University; Frederick G. Novy, University of Michigan; F. B. Mallory, Boston City Hospital. The Chemical Foundation of New York City has agreed to support the undertaking, and has already deposited with the treasurer of the National Research Council \$500.

#### INTERNATIONALIZING SERA STANDARDS

COOPERATION of the foremost laboratories of the world, including the United States, for the unification of international standards of anti-toxic sera has been begun on a large scale by the League of Nations Health Committee. Two preparatory conferences have been held; the work has been divided amongst the various national laboratories, and the individual studies have been begun.

The United States has agreed to cooperate through the United States Public Health Service at Washington, and through the presence at the conference of Dr. Rupert Blue, assistant surgeon general, stationed at Paris. German scientific men, as well as Japanese, and representatives of all the greater European medical services will take part.

Up to the present there has been much confusion in the various national standards of measuring the strength of anti-toxic sera for diseases such as dysentery, tetanus, diphtheria, syphilis, etc. This has had two serious effects. Men of science have been handicapped in studying methods of treatment of various vital diseases abroad, because of the different standards of measuring the strength of the anti-toxic sera employed; secondly, as international trade in sera is increasing, it represents not only an inconvenience, but a positive danger to have their strengths listed at varying standards.

In order to obviate these difficulties, the Health Committee of the League of Nations began a series of studies last October, which resulted in an international conference at London in December, to prepare plans for the first joint experimental inquiry of the sort ever attempted. A program was adopted whereby the study of the effects of the various standards was divided according to diseases amongst the various laboratories represented. To the Hygienic Laboratory at Washington it was proposed to allocate the study of tetanus and diphtheria. As soon as these studies have been completed, they will be coordinated through the State Serum Institute at Copenhagen.

Other bodies which will cooperate in the work are the Medical Research Council of Great Britain, The Pasteur Institute of France, the State Institute of Italy, State Institute of Warsaw, Hygienic Institute of Basle, Pasteur Institute of Brussels, Kitasato Institute of Japan, as well as Austrian and German organizations.

#### RELIEF WORK OF BRITISH UNIVERSITIES

MAURICE DE BUNSEN, chairman of the universities' committee, writes in *Nature* concern-