quarters.[1] The delegates, however, devoted very little time to consideration of the relative merits of the metric system and the English system, since the superiority of metric measurements seemed to be conceded by every one present. Discussion turned rather on questions of the best methods of furthering general adoption of the metric system. Representatives spoke on behalf of such diverse fields as architecture, astronomy, chemistry, civil engineering, education, electricity, medicine, optometry, pharmacy, physiology, public health, and other branches of pure and applied science.

Physicists, chemists and pharmacists, on the one hand, reported that the metric system is already in general use and the battle won as far as their portions of the field are concerned. Representatives of the medical societies, on the other hand, reported a surprising inertia on the part of physicians to make use of gram and milligram units instead of apothecaries' weight in writing prescriptions, although only metric units are used in recent editions of the pharmacopœia. Better instruction and drill in the actual use of metric units was demanded of all schools, and in particular of the medical schools.

The civil engineers and the architects stand apparently in a passive attitude, content to continue in the use of the English system until a demand on the part of the public indicates a greatly reduced inertia with reference to the abandonment of inches, feet and miles.

As far as the writer knows, this is the first conference at which the relative merits of *gradual* adoption of the metric system *vs.* compulsory universal adoption have been debated by a group of scientific men who have then gone definitely on record as favoring the policy of gradual adoption. The opposition has proceeded upon the assumption that the change to the metric system must be completed suddenly, or else it can not be made at all. As a result they conclude that the change must be made at an appalling cost to industry. The conference went on record unanimously as of the opinion that the gradual introduction of the metric system is practicable. The question of how legislation may be used to assist in bringing about the gradual change was not taken up at this conference.

Dr. W. A. Noyes read a paper by Dr. T. C. Mendenhall representing the National Academy of Sciences. In it Dr. Mendenhall combated with historical facts many of the fallacious arguments which have recently been advanced against the spread of the metric system. The paper will appear in full in SCIENCE.

Formal action was taken by the conference on four points, as follows:

1. *Voted,* that it is the sense of this meeting that we favor the gradual adoption of the metric system wherever practicable.

2. *Voted,* that this body take up with the United States Bureau of Education and other agencies, a plan for the better teaching of the metric system in the schools.

3. *Voted,* that the United States secretary of commerce be asked to secure information as to the extent to which the metric system is actually used at present in those countries which have made its use compulsory by law; and also in those countries where its use is not obligatory.

4. *Voted,* that the system of double-marking all goods be encouraged. (This vote was adopted by only a small majority.)

W. V. BINGHAM,
Secretary of the Conference
CARNEGIE INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

ACTIVITIES OF THE ROCKEFELLER FOUNDATION

THE *Journal* of the American Medical Association reports that the minister of education has accepted on behalf of the Japanese Government an invitation from George E. Vincent, president of the Rockefeller Foundation, New York, to name and send a commission of Japanese medical scientists to visit the medical institutions of the United States and Canada, as guests of the Rockefeller Foundation. This idea originated from the success that attended the visits to America of similar commissions from Great Britain, Brazil and Belgium. The commission will consist of four or five men, well known as representatives of the important branches of medical science and of the principal medical universities and institutes of the

[1] See this journal, June 23, 1922, "Are Scientists Encouraging Popular Ignorance?"

country. The spring of 1923 has been selected as the most suitable time for this visit, which will last about three months.

According to the agreement between the Rockefeller Foundation and the government of Honduras, a hookworm disease section and a public health department were organized in that country. The Foundation will bear 66 per cent. of the expenses during the first year and 34 per cent. during the second, and the Honduras government will assume all expense from the third year on.

In a report from Geneva, August 17, it was stated that the hygiene committee of the League of Nations had decided to accept the offer of the Rockefeller Foundation, amounting to the sum of $60,000 a year for three years, to allow an interchange of staff in the public health services of various countries, and a sum of $30,000 yearly for five years for the development of an international office for distributing information as to epidemics. After the necessary documents are signed, the plan will be put into action at once, and the interchange of staff will begin in October. For a period of two weeks, functionaries of various nationalities—a Bulgarian, two Belgians, two Czechs, five Italians, five Poles, five Russians and two Serbians—will pursue an intensive short course at Brussels, following which they will spend two months in the public health services of different countries.

SCIENTIFIC NOTES AND NEWS

SIR ERNEST RUTHERFORD, Cavendish professor of physics at the University of Cambridge, has been elected president of the British Association for the Advancement of Science in succession to Sir Charles S. Sherrington. The meeting next year will be at Liverpool, and it is expected that the meeting the following year will be in Canada.

PROFESSOR W. L. BRAGG, of Manchester University, who, together with his father, Sir William Bragg, was awarded the Nobel Prize for physics in 1915, delivered on September 6 the lecture in Stockholm as prescribed by the statutes of the Nobel Institution.

ENGINEER VICE-ADMIRAL SIR GEORGE GOODWIN, K. C. B., late engineer-in-chief of the fleet, and Dr. James Colquhoun Irvine, C. B. E., F. R. S., vice-chancellor and principal of St. Andrews University, have been appointed to be members of the advisory council to the committee of the privy council for scientific and industrial research.

DR. WILLARD ROUSE JILLSON, director and state geologist of the Kentucky Geological Survey, was elected an honorary member of the Natural Gas Association of America at its recent meeting in Kansas City.

DR. HENRY FAIRFIELD OSBORN, president of the American Museum of Natural History, has sailed from Seattle on the *President Grant* of the Admiral Line for Yokohoma. From Yokohoma Dr. Osborn will go to Korea and thence by rail to Peking to the headquarters of the museum, where he will meet the members of the Third Asiatic Expedition. During his stay in Peking, Dr. Osborn plans to make a trip to the edge of the Gobi Desert, where the expedition has found beds of Cretaceous and Tertiary deposits. From Peking, he will go to the Philippine Islands and from there to India to visit the fossil-bearing formations in the Siwilik Hills, where Mr. Barnum Brown is collecting for the museum.

AT the Pittsburgh meeting of the American Chemical Society, the Division of Industrial and Engineering Chemistry elected D. R. Sperry, chairman, W. A. Peters, Jr., vice-chairman, E. M. Billings, secretary, and the following were elected members of the executive committee: W. F. Hillebrand, Edward Mallinckrodt, Jr., F. M. deBeers, A. Silverman, H. C. Moody, and C. E. Coates.

NORMAN SNYDER, a member of the scientific staff of the Radio Laboratory of the Bureau of Standards, left the bureau June 1 for a leave of absence of several months to work in the research laboratory of the General Electric Company at Schenectady on electron tube problems.

F. W. STAVELY, Ph.D. (Chicago, '22), has accepted a position with the Firestone Tire and Rubber Company at Akron, Ohio.