Professor Frederick E. Breithut as chemical trade commissioner to Germany.

DR. CHARLES HASKELL DANFORTH has been appointed associate professor of anatomy in the Medical School of Stanford University.

MR. L. J. MORDELL, B.A., Cambridge, has been appointed a Fielden professor of pure mathematics at the University of Manchester as from September next.

DISCUSSION AND CORRESPONDENCE

MATHEMATICAL PROPAGANDA

AN unusually significant type of mathematical propaganda is noted in a recent number of the *Jahresbericht der Deutschen Mathematiker-Vereinigung*. It is here stated that as a result of the unfriendly tendencies towards mathematics there has been organized a kind of super-union of the various mathematical organizations in Germany. Twenty-one of these organizations have already associated themselves with this union, which explicitly aims to spread the practical and cultural significance of mathematics and to represent it in the public life of the German people. It aims further to establish a close union between investigation, teaching and practice with a view to their mutual advancement and inspiration.

The union is called *Mathematische Reichsverband* and it aims to hold at least one meeting each year composed of the delegates of the various organizations which belong to the union. Questions involving the work of the individual organizations associated with the union are not to be discussed at these general meetings and, in particular, such questions shall not be decided by a majority vote. On the contrary, the independence of these individual organizations is to be maintained in every respect. It claims to be already a union of *all* German mathematicians independently of whether their interests relate mainly to research or to teaching.

The tendency to bring investigators, teachers and agitators into the same fold found expression in our own country several years ago in the organization of the Mathematical Association of America, but the German movement noted above seems to be a much more pronounced effort towards uniting all the mathematicians of a country for the purpose of combating the unfriendly forces which have already made serious inroads into their favorite domain. These united efforts should result in a deeper study of the place which mathematics is destined to occupy in the civilized world and, in particular, in the educational systems designed to meet the needs of various classes of people.

It remains to be seen whether the mathematical material can be so reorganized that it will appeal strongly to the youths of our generation. The report on the reorganization of mathematics in secondary education, recently issued under the auspices of the Mathematical Association of America, is a serious effort in this direction and is in line with the aims of the union of German mathematicians noted above. Scientists will naturally watch with interest such developments in view of the fact that scientific expositions are frequently affected by the amount of mathematical knowledge that may be assumed on the part of the reader.

G. A. MILLER

PEARL'S BIOLOGY OF DEATH

PEARL'S "Biology of Death," published by Lippincott in the series of Monographs on Experimental Biology, though almost unique in English in content, is remarkably free from the controversial. As a work which has already opened up new fields of research it is desirable that its line of argument should be free from ambiguity and question.

The concluding chapter includes a series of curves purporting to emphasize two things, *viz.*

1. That the trend of human mortality in time is an extraordinarily complex biological phenomenon, in which many factors besides the best efforts of health officials are involved.

2. That for many causes of death a vast lot needs to be added to our knowledge of etiology, in the broadest sense, before really efficient control can be hoped for.

No exception can be taken to the correctness of these two statements, but there does seem considerable doubt that the graphs selected to illustrate them are adequate. This can be shown by reference to Fig. 55, p. 236. Here we have two logarithmic curves representing the weighted average death rate from typhoid fever respectively for countries having highly devel-