APPOINTMENT of an unpaid commission to supervise the organization of medical research workers was recommended by M. Douglas Flattery, of Boston, chairman of the special committee on medical research, during a conference with President Coolidge on October 9. Mr. Flattery also recommended the enactment of legislation for a national study of preventive medicine. This is in line with a recommendation made to President Harding about two years ago, which was discussed and approved by the cabinet. At that time President Harding referred the matter to Brigadier General Sawyer, his personal physician, to make such other recommendations as might seem suitable to him. The plan included the organization of all scientific workers in such colleges and laboratories as have laboratory equipment together with chemists, physicists, biologists, bacteriologists, physiologists and other scientific men working in related fields.

UNIVERSITY AND EDUCATIONAL NOTES

SUIT was filed in the circuit court on October 1, asking approval of the plans to raze the old Rush Medical College buildings at Harrison and Wood Streets, and to erect a $400,000 building to be known as the Rawson Clinical Laboratories, for which Frederick H. Rawson donated the sum of $300,000. The University of Chicago, according to the plan, will take over the property and build the new laboratory. A contract between the college and the university has been tentatively adopted, pending the approval of the court. A program which provides for the expenditure of $5,300,000, gifts to the university for the advancement of medical education, is to be carried out, the bill states, and includes the building of a hospital of 200 beds on the university campus.

THE president of Cuba has issued an order establishing a university governing assembly. It is to consist of thirty professors, thirty alumni and thirty students, and this body will have charge of the management of the university.

DR. WILLIAM M. MARRIOTT, chief of the department of diseases of children, Washington University Medical School, St. Louis, has been appointed dean of the school to succeed Dr. Nathaniel Allison, who becomes professor of orthopedic surgery at Harvard University Medical School, Boston.

PROFESSOR C. W. PARMELEE has been made head of the department of Ceramic Engineering at the University of Illinois, where he has been professor since 1916.

PROFESSOR J. W. MCCOLLOCH, of the Kansas State College, has been named acting head of the entomology department at the college during the absence of Professor G. A. Dean, who has a year's leave of absence.

DR. ALFRED S. ROMER has been appointed associate professor of vertebrate paleontology in the University of Chicago. Dr. Romer has been working in the American Museum of Natural History and the department of anatomy of New York University.

EDWIN B. POWERS, associate professor of anatomy at the College of Medicine of the University of Tennessee, at Memphis, is on leave for the year to take charge of the department of zoology of the University of Tennessee at Knoxville.

DR. CHARLES F. MARTIN has been appointed dean of McGill University faculty of medicine to succeed Dr. George E. Armstrong.

DR. GEORGE D. PORTER has been appointed head physical director at the University of Toronto to succeed Dr. James W. Barton, who resigned last spring.

DISCUSSION AND CORRESPONDENCE

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE "FOLIAR RAY"

IN a recently published article entitled "The significance of the 'Foliar Ray' in the evolution of Herbaceous Angiosperms" it becomes evident that the authors now have their facts in hand. May we ask that they will credit us with the same elementary common sense. The difference of opinion seems to have resolved itself mostly into a question of terminology. In the original article by Messrs. Sinnott and Bailey which appeared in 1914 there was a fundamental misconception. The bands of "interfascicular parenchyma" found in herbaceous stems are decidedly not the homologues of the radial bands which subtend the leaf traces. The attribution of such an idea to "Jeffrey and his school" was a mistake and the demolition of this man of straw has wasted much valuable journal space.

The writer believes that our critics still fail to realize the importance of nodal modifications around incoming leaf traces where storage is initiated. That the thinning of the stem and consequent obliteration of the radial storage ray led to the vertical extension of the flanking portions is still our own belief. Incoming food must be stored somewhere, and if the old storage region is being obliterated through a reduction in the foliar parenchyma outside the trace what is more logical than to suppose that the flanking tissue played up to fit the new situation.

Conversion of tracheidal tissue into parenchyma on

the flanks of a leaf trace may be called "widening of medullary rays" if one finds greater satisfaction in such a designation. In teaching the herbaceous stem, however, the writer has found that the student grasps the situation better when he realizes that the subtending nodal ray and the parenchyma which flanks the trace on either side are but parts of one physiological system specialized for food storage. As to its actual phylogeny this tissue would seem to represent a complex of vertical parenchyma united with vertical series of rays, but since the same thing can be said of the subtending ray there is no real difference between them. The flanking tissue is certainly not a single ray broadened out. Our critics are in danger here of setting up the same subtle doctrine of specificity of tissues that animates those realists who are so obsessed by the Platonic Idea of the stele that they can sense imaginary lines running across a leaf gap to separate cortex from pith.

As to the fact that some trees and shrubs have foliar rays, that would seem to have been known for some time. In fact it serves as the very basis from which the theory takes its departure. The damning fact that certain herbaceous stems, on the other hand, have "essentially continuous vascular cylinders" is to be regretted, perhaps, but it only shows that nature refuses to be forced into ways of absolutism in her operations.

So far as the writer can see we have come to a substantial basis of agreement as to facts.

Messrs. Sinnott and Bailey admit that foliar rays may occur in aerial stems, and they realize that "high multiseriate rays" or flanking storage parenchyma of a leaf trace is not the same thing as a subtending ray, hence they won't search any longer for leaf traces on the central side of such a flanking band.

The writer, on his part, is willing to call flanking tissue a medullary ray, though truth to tell, both terms are poor ones for the tissue in question. Further he gladly admits the existence of trees with leaf rays and herbs without any.

So all considered we come to substantial agreement as to how a tree became an herb. As far as the writer is concerned the affair is closed.

R. E. TORREY

MASSACHUSETTS AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE

FEMORAL DEFORMATION

DURING an examination of skeletal material from an archeological site at Roebuck, Ontario, it was found that in many cases a certain amount of dissimilarity existed between the right and left femora of the same individual. When paired femora were placed side by side on the same level, and with their condylar extremities together, it was found that their heads were on different levels, the right being usually the higher. This difference in the heights of the heads was due to a difference in the forward angles of the necks of the femora, that is, the angle between the neck of the femur and the horizontal. No twists or other abnormalities were observed in the shafts.

The deformity seems to have been very general among the inhabitants of this site. Of twenty-three pairs of adult femora examined, only three pairs were normal. The deformity is noticeable also among the bones of children, and even among infants so small that it is quite certain that they never walked. This would seem to prove that the deformity was congenital, and shows that it was certainly not the direct result of any habitual occupation.

Detailed examination has been made only in the case of adult skeletons. It shows that of twenty-one pairs of bones seventeen had the right deformed and six the left, two pairs having both bones deformed. In the case of the latter, the inclination of the necks was in opposite directions.

Although it has been asserted that the apparent hereditary nature of the deformity shows that it was not the direct result of habitual occupation of any sort, still habitual occupation may have been its primary cause. If it had been caused for generations by occupation it would ultimately, it may be presumed, be handed on by heredity; and thus a theoretical cause for the deformity may be found both in the case of adults and of children.

G. E. RHOADES

OTTAWA, CANADA

A CASE OF SUPERSENSITIVENESS TO THE POISONOUS ACTION OF THE CASTOR BEAN

THE frequency with which the castor bean seed is used in elementary courses in botany makes it seem advisable to record a case of supersensitiveness to the poisonous action of the castor bean plant which came under my observation.

The subject, Miss K., while taking the laboratory work in botany as a student developed a severe case of what appeared to be hay fever. It was apparently associated with something used in the laboratory. Not until a year later when she acted as an assistant in the same course was the castor bean found to be the cause.

The attacks were initiated with severe sneezing and some headache and general discomfort a few minutes after exposure. Her face became inflamed and puffy, eyes reddened and swelled, breathing was accompanied by a wheezy sensation. The mucous membranes were decidedly irritated and later cracked. The surface of the cornea of the eye in some cases became slightly wrinkled. After the heaviest attack