

## IS OUR PLAN OF MEETINGS THE BEST POSSIBLE ?

DURING the recent Washington meetings of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and Affiliated Societies I tried to satisfy my appetite by partaking of the scientific menus prepared. Eagerly I went from section to section to glean all I could, while the opportunity lasted, from the tables containing food. I thought I might eat without resulting indigestion. But after it was all over and I began to take stock of the whole banquet I was frankly disappointed. I was still hungry. And why?

I tried to analyze the situation and find out. After the hustle and excitement were all over and scientific tranquillity again prevailed in Washington, the following factors and resulting questions were considered as being closely related to the problem:

In several of the sections the programs were made up of a great many fragmentary papers unrelated to anything either preceding or following—models of isolation in majestic aloofness of any entangling alliances with other parts of the program. While five or ten minutes had been indicated as the time required for a paper, in numerous cases the enthusiastic exponent of the fragment of truth seemed utterly oblivious of the passage of time and the fact that he had made not only a probable but a palpable error in his calculations of two hundred or three hundred per cent. The great number of papers listed, therefore, looked formidable and prevented any material discussion of them to determine the exact relationship they bore to the world into which they had been momentarily exposed.

A surprisingly large number of these presentations were made by the younger generation of scientists, some of whom are just appearing on the horizon; and while the meetings were in session the older, wiser and more experienced members were often congregated in the halls enjoying the cordial contacts of friendship or exchanging views on matters of common interest. Their attitude seemed to be that they could later read the papers that are presented in the society's magazine, so why waste time in hearing them?

Now while it is recognized that one of the most important advantages to be gained from the meetings of the American Association for the Advancement of Science is the personal association with one's coworkers in science, may it not be possible to make the meetings so stimulating and interesting that more will desire to be present? Would it not be well to have the symposium idea more thoroughly developed and a much greater amount of interesting discussion engaged in? If the subjects for the symposium are

carefully chosen from the standpoint of importance and current interest, the foundation should be laid for meetings of great benefit to those attending. In that event the menu might be so inviting that even the older members would be attracted to it and then give a really worth while "after-dinner speech."

It might be argued that this method would deprive many of the younger men of the opportunity of appearing on the program. But the door would still be open to them to contribute their viewpoint in the discussion or perhaps present some of the important symposium papers. Considering, however, the greatest good to the greatest number, would there not be distinct advantages to be gained by providing for fewer formal, fragmentary papers and for more time for thoroughly discussing in an informal way and from many angles some of the big aspects of research as applied to the outstanding problems with which the section for the time being is most concerned? I wonder if others may not have asked themselves the same question.

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## EVOLUTION IN EDUCATION IN CALIFORNIA<sup>1</sup>

IN view of criticisms made before the State Board of Education regarding the presentation of the subject of evolution in certain text-books used in the high schools and junior colleges of this state, and of the board's desire that a careful review of this subject be made by qualified experts, the State Board on August 5, 1924, requested

the presidents of the institutions in California accredited for high school certification as follows: University of California, Stanford University, Mills College, University of Southern California, Occidental College, Pomona College, University of Redlands, College of the Pacific and Dominican College to review these text-books and report to this board whether in their judgment there is in any of these text-books a presentation of the subject of evolution in such a way as to discredit the Bible and to develop in the minds of high school students an attitude of irreverence and atheism.

The president of the University of California was requested by the State Board of Education to serve as chairman of the committee of nine presidents.

The list of high school text-books of science submitted to the Committee of Nine, with page references to passages relating to evolution, is as follows:

<sup>1</sup> Report of Committee of College and University Presidents on the subject of evolution as treated in certain text-books used in high schools and junior colleges of California.