

nearly all depths the water was warmer than in 1924 by 2 to 3 degrees, even though the temperature was very high last year. The air temperature was also high, and whereas winter minima of -48° to -50° were formerly recorded, last winter the lowest was scarcely -30° . It was mild also during the summer, and the glaciers are rapidly diminishing both in length and thickness, so that mountain ridges emerge. Lastly, information is given as to the present position of the coal industry. The Norwegian company continues to work full time, while the Dutch are at present contenting themselves with the erection of works. Much time has been lost by the Swedes owing to a fire in their mine, now extinguished. The Anglo-Russian Company is continuing its operations, and gets good prices on the Murman Coast.

THE NOBEL PRIZES

ACCORDING to press dispatches from Stockholm the board of directors of the Nobel Prize fund has, for the first time since the first prizes were given twenty-four years ago, decided to withhold all five of the prizes for this year. The reasons for this unprecedented decision is stated to be partly because of lack of qualified candidates and partly because of need for funds for the Nobel Library and the Physical and Chemical Institute, both founded in Stockholm by Alfred Nobel as part of his memorial.

Previous press dispatches had stated that high taxation in Sweden, an indirect consequence of the war, was imperiling the continuance of the Nobel prizes. It was said that the Nobel prizes in 1901 amounted to 709,234 crowns (about \$177,600), and the taxes were 88,042 crowns (about \$22,000). In 1923 the prizes had shrunk to 574,676 crowns, but the taxes had risen to 578,006 crowns, exceeding the income of the funds. For this reason the Nobel family has petitioned the Stockholm government to exempt the prize foundation from taxation. Their petition is receiving the support of the Swedish newspapers, scientists, literary men and the public generally.

In previous years prizes in one or more of the individual classifications have been withheld, but this is the first time that it has been decided to award none of the five. The five prizes are physics, chemistry, medicine or physiology, literature and the Nobel peace prize.

The Swedish Academy of Science awards the first two; the Stockholm Faculty of Medicine the third; the Swedish Academy of Literature awards the literature prize, and the peace prize is awarded by a committee of five elected by the Norwegian Storting.

It has been announced that the 1924 physics prize to Professor Siegbahn was in recognition of his im-

portant discoveries in the X-ray spectra of the elementary substances.

PLANS FOR INCREASING THE ENDOWMENT OF THE SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

THE Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution has made the following announcement concerning the proposed \$10,000,000 increase to the institution's endowment:

The board of regents of the Smithsonian Institution announces its decision to go before the American people to raise an addition of \$10,000,000 to the institution's endowment for fundamental scientific research and publication. Since its foundation in 1846 the Smithsonian's initial endowment has only doubled, and its annual income of \$65,000 has been for years inadequate to maintain its many and varied investigations and publications. Since the war, particularly, the rise in costs has materially cut down those activities, suspending some publications such as the "Contributions to Knowledge" series, cutting others to a third of what they were, and restricting the prosecution of such essential researches as that of Dr. Charles G. Abbot on the sun and its influence on the weather.

At the present moment lack of funds prevents the institution from undertaking sixteen major projects for research. Many of these projects are of immediate importance. Some of them, for example, will lead to an increase in the food supply from the sea, others will furnish data whereby the hardwoods, the fruits, the food, drug, oil and cordage plants of the Philippines will become increasingly available, while a third group will provide formulae to assist the engineer in solving the increasingly complex problems which face him.

The economic importance of such projects as these needs no demonstration. Nevertheless they are, like practically all of the Smithsonian's work, investigations in the field of pure research. They will form the groundwork for the applied scientist. Consequently, they are in the main investigations which will not be promoted unless the Smithsonian promotes them. For that reason the board of regents has determined to ask for an additional \$10,000,000 to the institution's endowment.

The regents recognize the fact that the public will be surprised to have the Smithsonian turn to it for funds rather than to the government. But that surprise arises from a common misconception of the institution's position. It is not a government bureau. It was privately founded and privately endowed; it is privately directed and privately financed.

It sprang from the bequest of James Smithson, an English scientist, who never set foot in this country. In 1826 he willed his fortune of \$550,000 *in trust* to the United States for "the increase and diffusion of knowledge among men." Organized in 1846, the Smithsonian began at once making geological, botanical, zoological and ethnological studies of various sections of the continent, col-