Shreve, of the Carnegie Institution of Washington, spoke on the history and work of the Desert Laboratory at Tucson. The meeting was attended by representatives of the Desert Laboratory of the Carnegie Institution of Washington, the Boyce Thompson Institute of Plant Research, Southwestern Arboretum, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Biological Survey of the Bureau of Entomology and Forest Service, Arizona Agricultural Experiment Station and the department of biology of the University of Arizona. Meetings are to be held at frequent intervals in the future, but formal organization was considered inadvisable. Dr. J. G. Brown, Dr. Forrest Shreve and Mr. W. G. McGinnies were named as a committee to arrange for future meetings.

EFFORTS of the last two years have culminated in an agreement whereby the *Index Medicus,* published since 1879 under various auspices, and the *Quarterly Cumulative Index,* published since 1916 by the American Medical Association, will be combined and issued as a single publication to be known as the *Quarterly Cumulative Index Medicus.* The new bibliographic principles, including primarily classification of subjects and authors in one alphabet, will be maintained in the new publication. It will, moreover, include the extensive bibliographic material of the library of the Surgeon-General's Office in Washington, D. C., covering, instead of the three hundred periodicals to which the *Quarterly Cumulative Index* was formerly limited, practically the entire medical literature of the world. The publication will be printed on the presses of the American Medical Association. The Carnegie Institution, which has in recent years supported the *Index Medicus,* will bear a portion of the expense. The first issue of the new periodical will appear in April, 1927, and will cover the literature received during the first three months of that year.

Industrial and Engineering Chemistry states that in order to encourage work in the field of synthetic rubber, the Presidium of the Supreme Council of National Economy of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics announces two prizes for processes for the preparation of synthetic rubber. Two prizes are offered for the best methods found to satisfy the conditions of the contest: a first prize of $50,000 and a second prize of $25,000. All contestants must present complete descriptions and reports of their processes, including 2 kgs of the synthetic rubber preparation, not later than January 1, 1928.

UNIVERSITY AND EDUCATIONAL NOTES

MRS. ISAAC H. CLOTHIER, of Wynnewood, has given Swarthmore College $100,000 towards the erection of an auditorium or other memorial to her husband, who was for forty-eight years a member of the board of managers of the college.

JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER, JR., has made a gift of $150,000 to Princeton University for the purpose of enlarging the university gymnasium.

COLONEL R. W. LEONARD, of St. Catharine's, Ontario, has made a gift of $35,000 to Dalhousie University, Halifax.

BROWN UNIVERSITY has completed plans and will proceed with the erection of its proposed new chemical laboratory, which is expected to cost about $100,000 with equipment. A contract for the building has been let.

APPOINTMENTS of former fellows in medicine of the National Research Council to academic posts have been announced as follows: Dr. Louis Leiter, assistant professor of medicine, University of Chicago. Dr. Leiter is at present on leave of absence in Munich. Dr. William H. Chambers, instructor in physiology, Yale University. Dr. Jay McLean, assistant attending surgeon and lecturer in surgery, the Polyclinic Hospital of New York City. Dr. Clarence A. Mills, associate professor of medicine, Peking Union Medical College. Dr. Bernhard Steinberg, director of laboratories and research, Toledo Hospital, Ohio. Dr. Charles S. Woodall, physician to the Walter E. Fernald State School, Waverley, Massachusetts.

DR. FREDERICK W. OWENS, assistant professor of mathematics at Cornell University, has been appointed head of the department of mathematics at Pennsylvania State College.

DISCUSSION AND CORRESPONDENCE

SAND FLOTATION IN NATURE

IN connection with the articles on sand flotation which have appeared in SCIENCE during 1926 (63: 405–406, 571; 64: 138), it may be interesting to note that I have observed this phenomenon on Douglas Lake in Cheboygan County, Michigan, on more than a dozen days during each summer for the past fifteen years. The best explanation in these cases is that given by Edwin H. Hall (SCIENCE 63: 571) that at a time when the shore is dry, ripples of water lapping dry sand take down with them a certain amount of sand which remains in the surface film until the particles are entirely wetted, whereupon they sink. At Douglas Lake it has always been noted at times when there was an offshore wind, but never when this wind was strong; usually only when the wind is hardly more than perceptible, if at all. The ripples that

pick up the sand may be caused by any number of disturbances such as a fish leaping from the water, or a bird or insect striking the water, or rowing or other human disturbances. The patches are usually but two or three centimeters in diameter, but occasionally may reach as much as twenty cm. The larger patches sometimes are due to union of smaller ones, as has been observed. In a very gentle breeze these patches may go out three or four hundred meters into the lake before they sink. Any disturbance of the patches such as touching them causes all the grains to sink immediately.

At no time at Douglas Lake have any of these patches of floating sand had their origin during a time of high wind. However, in two instances in my experience the sand flotation has been the result of sand being blown onto the water. Each of these two cases has been when a strong wind was forced to blow up over a dune, the face of which was cut into by a body of water. Some of the swiftly moving sand hitting the water at a very acute angle remained in the surface film. In the case at Lake Michigan the amount of sand that remained on the surface was sufficient to interfere with the enjoyment of swimming when one opened his mouth at the surface of the water. While most of the sand went to the bottom very shortly, some of it was still on the lake as much as fifteen meters out from the shore; beyond that, however, the wind could hit the water and disturb it sufficiently to cause no more sand to remain in the surface film. In the second case the sand was blown into the Kansas River. That that hit the river where the current was boiling immediately sank to the bottom. Close to the shore, however, where the water was not obviously disturbed, although moving, a fair quantity of the sand remained in the surface film. The sand that remained in the surface film floated down stream close to the lee bank, which was also on the side opposite from the main current. Although constantly diminished in quantity, nevertheless some small patches were still visible a kilometer down the stream. At this place the wind had full sweep of the river, which disturbance ended the flotation.

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THE NEIGHBORS

IN SCIENCE for November 19 (page 497) it is stated that an Association of Professional Astronomers will meet in New Haven in December. There is no such organization nor any need of one. Some astronomers on the Atlantic coast have, however, been carrying out since 1920 a plan which has proved so useful that possibly other groups (in other localities or in other sciences) may wish to make the same experiment. Beginning in June, 1920, a number of us whose chief interest is research have been meeting informally about four times a year for the purpose of exchanging ideas and getting the benefit of the collective wisdom and experience of the whole group in the solution of our individual problems. But it is of the essence of this idea that there should be no organization; there is no constitution, no rules of any kind, no officers, no fixed list of members and no dues. We have even lacked a name until very recently, when we have begun to call ourselves the Neighbors. At first we met in New York City, but this was found to be unnecessarily expensive, and for some of the members it was somewhat inconvenient. We now meet at New Haven because it is centrally located and because the courtesies extended to us by two clubs in the city make the meetings much more pleasant than they could be in a busy metropolitan hotel. These meetings begin on Friday afternoon and break up somewhat gradually, most of the out-of-town members leaving on Saturday, a few sometimes remaining over until Sunday. We spend all this time together except the few hours that must be wasted in sleep. It is understood that no one is to attempt to read a paper, but during this day or two there is much astronomy in the air; some of it is very much so, for it has gotten to be a tradition with us that our statements need not be well considered. Many a fascinating theory has seen the light of day, flourished and passed on, all in the space of twenty minutes.

In a small group like this, meeting so frequently, our knowledge of each other has gotten to be intimate and has given rise to a network of friendships which in themselves, aside from any questions of scientific results, justify the existence of the Neighbors.

FRANK SCHLESINGER
NEW HAVEN,
NOVEMBER 29, 1926

FIELD TRIPS IN GEOGRAPHY

TWO recent notes in SCIENCE for June 18 and October 22 have shown the clear appreciation felt among geologists for active field work by their students during the prosecution of their studies. It may be interesting, therefore, to publish here the terms of a travel scholarship recently established in the department of geology and geography at the University of Wisconsin. In this connection, it should be added that the ideal toward which the department is striving is that each student who majors in geography be required to spend fourteen days in the field at least 500 miles away from Madison, during the spring recess of the year in which he takes his degree. The announcement below gives briefly the plan which the student is ex-