tific workers in the country, in order that their attitude in this matter may be definitely ascertained.

We are aware that other organizations exist in the interests of general science; but they have other functions to perform. The British Association and the British Science Guild, for example, serve the useful function of disseminating the results of research work, and of creating an interest in science among the general public. The Royal Society exercises a dominant influence in scientific research, and appropriately is looked upon as the principal adviser of government; but, being limited to a membership of approximately 450 fellows, it can not fully represent the interests of the general body of scientific workers. There are also various institutions which act as qualifying bodies for certain branches of science; but these are professedly sectional.

A body like the union does not aim to influence scientific work except by promoting and protecting the general interests of the profession as a whole. We consider it should be entirely non-political, but with definite economic and cultural aims—namely, to improve the status of men and women of science, and to aid the cause, both nationally and internationally, of science itself, both pure and applied. The union has already been markedly successful in bringing about improvements in the conditions of service of groups of scientific workers in government and private employ. It has been represented on, or given evidence before, various committees set up by government, when the interests of scientific workers have been involved. On several occasions it has intervened successfully to prevent the shutting down or curtailment of the activities of research institutions supported by public funds. The general secretary, as a member of the East Africa Parliamentary Commission appointed in 1924, was able to stress the importance of scientific research as the basis of economic development. The prominence given to the recommendations contained in the report of this commission are a fitting preliminary to the remarkable report on scientific research presented by Lord Balfour to the Imperial Conference.

These activities must be extended. If the union could speak for a united profession, it would be more successful in obtaining representation for scientific workers on all bodies set up to consider problems of national, Imperial, and international importance. It could make a comprehensive survey of the whole field of research and report on the types of fundamental research likely to lead in the near future to important advances in knowledge and the means most likely to promote them. It could play a valuable part by examining and criticizing the activities of government departments and other organizations concerned with the encouragement and application of science. It could draw up a code of professional ethics. It could make a complete register of all those engaged in work demanding for its performance an adequate training in science. In all these ways the union could undoubtedly become of the greatest scientific and national importance, without trespassing in any way on the functions of existing organizations. Scientific men and women must themselves be responsible for deciding what they consider to be best in the interests of their profession; but we suggest that on the existing foundation of the union can be built up an organization that may be of real service. The name, the precise function, the organization, and rate of subscription of any such body is entirely within the control of its members.

Possibly one misconception that seems to be existent should be removed: some non-members still ask whether to join the National Union of Scientific Workers would not mean being called out on strike in certain situations. The strike is not a possible weapon for scientific workers and the union has never imagined the possibility of its employment.

The present rate of subscription to the union is 30s. per annum; and this may account for the reluctance of many of the younger members of the profession to join; but, with any considerable addition to the membership, it should be possible to reduce the subscription substantially, and we aim at an organization that can be worked with a membership rate of approximately 10s.

In order that we may know what line of action is considered by the majority of scientific workers to be in the best interests of science, we beg you to return the enclosed form duly filled up, whether the response be favorable or unfavorable to the union. It is understood that your reply will not be regarded as an application to join the present or the reorganized society. We wish merely to ascertain your views in order that proposals may be drafted in accordance with the general views of scientific workers.

## ANNUAL MEETING OF THE AMERICAN GEOPHYSICAL UNION

THE eighth annual general assembly of the American Geophysical Union will be held on Friday, April 29. Section meetings of the union will take place on Thursday and Friday, April 28 and 29. The general assembly will be held at 2:30 P. M. in the lecture room of the building of the National Academy of Sciences and the National Research Council in Washington. The presiding officers will be H. S. Washington, *chairman,* and G. W. Littlehales, *vice-chairman.* This meeting will include reports by the chairmen of the six sections of the union and a symposium and discussion on "Some Factors of Climatic Control," consisting of seven papers.

The meeting of the section of geodesy will be held on April 28, beginning at 9:30 A. M., with William Bowie, *chairman,* and F. E. Wright, *vice-chairman,* as presiding officers. On the following morning at 9:30 the section of seismology will meet, the presiding officers of which will be L. H. Adams, *chairman,* and N. H. Heck, *vice-chairman.* Among other scientific papers the program includes a series of reports of progress in seismological work in the United States.

The section of meteorology meets on April 29 at

9:30 A. M., under the chairmanship of H. H. Kimball, with G. W. Littlehales as *vice-chairman*. A feature of the program is a symposium and discussion on the needs and possibilities of measurements of ultra-violet light in solar spectrum and of the ozone content of the high atmosphere. The sessions of the section of terrestrial magnetism and electricity will be held on April 29, beginning at 9:30 A. M., with the following presiding officers: N. H. Heck, *chairman*, and J. H. Dellinger, *vice-chairman*. The scientific program consists of a symposium and discussion with nine titles on the correlations of various radio phenomena with solar and terrestrial magnetic and electrical activities. The section of oceanography, of which the presiding officers are T. Wayland Vaughan, *chairman*, and G. T. Rude, *vice-chairman*, meets on April 28 at 2:30 P. M. The scientific program consists of nine papers on various phases of oceanography. A subscription dinner for all interested in oceanography is planned for 7 P. M. at the Cosmos Club, after which the last three papers of the program will be presented, followed by general discussion of oceanographic plans and procedures. The section of volcanology will meet simultaneously with the section of oceanography, with T. A. Jaggar, Jr., *chairman*, and F. E. Wright, *vice-chairman*, presiding officers. There are seven scientific papers listed on the program of this section.

An exhibit of geophysical instruments, researches and applications will be displayed during 9 A. M. to 5 P. M., Friday, April 22, through Friday, April 29, 1927 (except Sunday, April 24), in the southwest and northeast exhibit rooms of the National Academy of Sciences and National Research Council building. The exhibits will be arranged for by the executive committees of the different sections and furnished by the Astrophysical Observatory of the Smithsonian Institution, the Bureau of Standards, the Carnegie Institution of Washington, the Coast and Geodetic Survey, the Naval Observatory, the Scripps Institution of Oceanography, the Weather Bureau and others.

## SCIENTIFIC NOTES AND NEWS

DR. ERWIN F. SMITH, pathologist in charge of the laboratory of plant pathology in the U. S. Bureau of Plant Industry, died on April 6, aged seventy-three years.

THE three vice-presidents of the American Philosophical Society will, owing to the death of the president, Dr. Charles D. Walcott, preside in turn at the meeting celebrating the two-hundredth anniversary of the society to be held in Philadelphia at the end of April. The vice-presidents are Dr. Henry Fairfield Osborn, president of the American Museum of Natural History; Dr. W. W. Campbell, president of the University of California, and Dr. F. X. Dercum, professor of nervous and mental diseases at Jefferson Medical College. Dr. Osborn will give the address at the reception to be held in the building of the Historic Society of Pennsylvania. Dr. Albrecht Penck, professor of geography in the University of Berlin, will be a speaker at one of the general sessions.

PROFESSOR W. W. LEPESCHKIN, of the Charles University, Prague, Czecho-Slovakia, has been appointed visiting plant physiologist to the Missouri Botanical Garden and visiting professor of plant physiology at Washington University for the first part of the college year 1927–28. Professor Lepeschkin will give a course on the physiological processes of the plant from the physico-chemical point of view and will also give three conferences a week to graduate students. Further additions to the permanent staff of the Shaw School of Botany are to be made, but the coming of Dr. Lepeschkin inaugurates a system of annual visiting professorships in botany which will be continued indefinitely.

DR. HERMANN WEYL, professor of mathematics at the Institute of Technology in Zurich, will spend the academic year 1927–28 at Columbia University.

THE Royal Academy of Sciences of Holland has awarded the Lorentz medal for the most distinguished work in the field of physics to Dr. Max Planck, professor of physics at the University of Berlin.

DR. ALBRECHT PENCK and Dr. Hellman, professors at the University of Berlin, have been elected honorary members of the Geographical Society of Madrid.

THE council of the Institution of Mining and Metallurgy has, according to *Nature*, made the following awards: The gold medal of the institution to Professor William Frecheville, in recognition of his services to the mining industry and to mining engineering education during a long and distinguished professional career; The Consolidated Gold Fields of South Africa, Ltd., gold medal and premium to Dr. Sydney W. Smith, for his paper, embodying much original research, on "Liquation in Molten Alloys and its possible Geological Significance."

DR. HUGH H. YOUNG, of the Johns Hopkins University, has been elected an honorary member of the German Society of Urology. Other honorary members elected are: Professors Alessandri, of Rome; Fedoroff, of Leningrad; Ferra, of Turin; Brenner, of Linz; Völcher, of Halle, and Wildbolz, of Berne.

DR. JOHN A. MANDEL, professor of chemistry in New York University, University and Bellevue Medical College, has been elected member of the Deutsche Akademie der Naturforscher, of Halle.