

prehensive system has been outlined by Felt and Bishop<sup>8</sup> in which code prefixes are proposed, these latter to have nomenclatural and differential status, to be written as a part of the generic name, save that the latter is also capitalized; they would therefore function as taxonomical classifying devices and thus facilitate the work of specialists by making it necessary to examine only the names in a given family or larger group before proposing a new genus, and this without material interference with the status of the genus as to date of erection, type and author or transferal from one family, order, class or phylum to another.

It should be assumed that the proposals outlined above were made for the purpose of bettering nomenclatural conditions. No one of them probably includes all that is best or acceptable. They all emphasize, however, the need of a systematic nomenclature and that can not be secured without more restrictions than now obtain. It is here suggested that our leading zoologists, particularly those interested in nomenclature, and this should really include all zoologists, give serious consideration to this entire matter and endeavor to work out, very probably through the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature or a committee appointed by that commission, a method of more nearly meeting present-day needs than the one now current. This would mean a large amount of labor. It should be entirely possible first to establish within certain basic divisions such modifications as might be necessary, though a comprehensive presentation covering the entire animal group would be more satisfactory and entirely within possibilities. It may be stated in this connection that the writer has applied code prefixes under the name of classifying symbols to all the families of American insects and is using the system in arranging the New York State Collection of Insects. The precise plan adopted is not so important as to secure a material change for the better, one reasonably consonant with modern classificatory or placing methods. Objectors may claim that zoological classification has not advanced sufficiently to permit the adoption of a general plan. There is no greater aid to understanding than an effort to group logically the various components of a series. Several of our associates have expressed themselves in favor of a better system and have stated that a change should have been made years ago. Many of the older zoologists undoubtedly feel rather well satisfied with the present system, because it is the one which they have known for years. Efficiency should be the final test and if this generation fails to hand down a satisfac-

tory terminology, it is well within possibilities that a succeeding generation, possibly driven to action by confusion worse confounded, may adopt such radical changes that our present nomenclature will become an historical relic. Mere age is no reflection. Linnaeus were he alive to-day would undoubtedly propose a system more nearly adequate to present needs.

The suggestion by Professor Stiles that there be a custodian, as it were, of zoological nomenclature has merit, though it lacks desirable comprehensiveness so far as meeting the situation as a whole is concerned. There is something in Professor Needham's plea for a better "way of disposing of our nomenclatural trouble than by making it as burdensome as possible and then making it permanent."<sup>9</sup> It is not enough simply to avoid homonyms. There is urgent need of some adequate differential or classifying device as part of the generic name before we can claim reasonable efficiency in nomenclature. A careful reading of the numbered paragraphs shows that improvement is possible. It may even be admitted that action along progressive lines is posterity's due.

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NEW YORK STATE MUSEUM

## SCIENTIFIC EVENTS

### MEMORIAL SERVICES TO CHARLES D. WALCOTT

In commemoration of the life and achievements of Dr. Charles D. Walcott, memorial services were held at a number of educational institutions in the Pacific Northwest on or near the date of March 31. This particular date was chosen because it was Dr. Walcott's birthday.

The movement was initiated by the officers and council of the Northwest Scientific Association and meetings were held at the following places: Montana State University, Missoula; Montana State College, Bozeman; Montana State School of Mines, Butte; Idaho State University, Moscow; State Normal School, Lewiston, Idaho; Oregon Agricultural College, Corvallis; Washington State University, Seattle; Washington State College, Pullman; Washington State Normal School, Ellensburg; Washington State Normal School, Bellingham; Washington State Normal School, Cheney; Gonzaga University, Spokane University, Spokane College and Whitworth College, all of Spokane, Washington.

In addition to these services a joint service was held in Spokane, Washington, in which the following organizations participated: Eastern Washington His-

<sup>8</sup> *American Naturalist*, 60: 275-281, 1926.

<sup>9</sup> *SCIENCE*, 32: 296, 1910.

torical Society, Associated Engineers of Spokane, Lewis and Clark High School, North Central High School and the members of the Northwest Scientific Association residing in Spokane.

J. W. HUNGATE

CHENEY, WASH.

### ACTIVITIES OF THE AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

THE trustees of the American Museum of Natural History, at their quarterly meeting on May 2, adopted a resolution accepting an invitation from the Belgian government to cooperate in the latter's plans for research work and scientific development in the study of wild animal life in the Belgian Congo, Africa. The resolution expressed appreciation of the action taken by King Albert of the Belgians in authorizing the setting aside of a vast area as a game preserve. Baron de Cartier, Belgian ambassador to the United States, recently made known his government's plans, and the museum intends to organize American scientific cooperation.

Harold E. Anthony, Curator of Mammals at the museum, who accompanied the Egyptian-Sudan expedition, financed by Irving K. Taylor, which left New York last December, reported that the expedition had obtained about 200 mammals, 400 birds and some fish and reptiles, which have been brought back to the museum. The mammals include buffalo, hartebeeste, water-buck, cob, oribi and gazelles.

A resolution was adopted to name the proposed African Hall section of the Museum the Akeley African Hall, as a memorial to the late Carl E. Akeley. It was announced that all the material collected by the Eastman-Pomeroy-Akeley expedition has been received at the museum, including buffalo, greater koodoo, lesser koodoo, water hole, plains and wild dog groups.

Mr. and Mrs. Martin Johnson, who have been in Africa several years photographing wild life, will arrive in New York the latter part of May, and they will show their films during the early fall. Arthur S. Vernay, who has previously obtained specimens of the rapidly vanishing big game of India for the museum, has contributed a greater sable antelope group for the African hall.

Lincoln J. Ellsworth was elected a trustee.

### MEETING OF SIGMA XI AND DEDICATION OF THE NEW PHYSICS LABORATORY AT UNION COLLEGE

THE national executive committee of Sigma Xi held its annual business meetings on April 29 and 30, at Schenectady, New York. On the evening of the twenty-ninth, the chapter of Union College and the

chapter of Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, which are the two oldest chapters of Sigma Xi next to the parent chapter at Cornell University, joined in giving a dinner in honor of the members of the executive committee. Two hundred members of Sigma Xi from the Capital District were present for the occasion. The meeting was presided over jointly by Professor L. W. Clark, president of the Rensselaer chapter, and Professor P. I. Wold, president of the Union chapter. Among the speakers of the evening were Dr. Frank Pierrepont Graves, commissioner of education of the state of New York, who gave an address on "Sigma Xi and Education"; Dr. Henry B. Ward, University of Illinois, past president of Sigma Xi, speaking on "Animal Parasites and Human Welfare"; Dr. F. K. Richtmyer, Cornell University, past president of Sigma Xi, speaking on "The Meaning of 'Wave Length' in Theories of Radiation," and Dr. George A. Baitzell, Yale University, speaking on "Coagulation Phenomena in relation to Tissue Formation."

A message from Governor Alfred Smith was received during the dinner reciting the accomplishments of science in the affairs of this country, and of the state in particular, and expressing the hope and confidence that Sigma Xi would continue doing her share in the future.

It was agreed by all those present that the meeting was one of the most enjoyable Sigma Xi events which has ever occurred in this section of New York State and it should go a long way toward stimulating increased interest in Sigma Xi on the part of members and non-members in the Capital District.

Dedication of the new Physics Laboratory at Union College took place on April 30, 1927, in the Lecture Room of the new building, with the following program:

Dr. E. W. Rice, Jr., presiding.

Invocation by Rev. George Alexander, New York City.  
Professor P. I. Wold, on behalf of the physics department.

President C. A. Richmond, on behalf of the college.

Dr. W. R. Whitney, on behalf of the trustees of the college.

Professor F. R. Moulton, University of Chicago.

Dr. Moulton, in giving the main address of the exercises, spoke on the subject of "Science and Civilization," giving a philosophical consideration of the question of the adaptability of the human race and the problems facing future generations, in the light of the revolutionary changes in our methods of living brought on by science during the past two or three generations.

After the program a buffet luncheon was served and the building was opened for inspection.

P. I. W.