

Britain, and of the Museum of Practical Geology, London.

THE death is announced of Dr. E. J. Lesser, of Mannheim, Germany, known for his work on the carbohydrates, and of Dr. Theodore Curtius, of the University of Heidelberg, author of publications on the hydrazins.

THE sixth annual meeting of the Virginia Academy of Science will be held on May 4 and 5 at the College of William and Mary. A new section, that of geology, is to be organized at this meeting. Other sections of the academy are: astronomy, mathematics and physics, biology, zoology, chemistry, psychology and education and geology. Donald W. Davis, president of the College of William and Mary, is president of the academy.

A NATIONAL meeting on oil and gas power is being planned for June 14, 15 and 16, to be held at Pennsylvania State College. In connection with the meeting will be an exhibition—the first of its kind—of oil and gas engines, parts and accessories. It will be located in the new mechanical laboratory of the college, which is a well-lighted building with 20,000 square feet of floor space. The college is not only providing exhibition space free of charge, but is also supplying light, power, steam and compressed air in limited amount for the use of exhibitors. The technical program calls for a number of sessions on subjects of vital interest to this field of engineering. Such subjects as power economics, fuel, oil specifications, research and specialization in engine manufacturing will be discussed by prominent engineers and executives in the industry. The meeting is held jointly by the oil and gas power division of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers and the Pennsylvania State College.

IN connection with the recent celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the founding of the University of Porto Rico, plans were discussed for the establishment of a school of tropical agriculture. The possibilities of founding a joint school with Cornell University have been considered. Dr. Livingston Farrand, president of Cornell University, who attended the anniversary celebration, is reported to have expressed his approval of the project and has outlined the details of the institution and its requirements, financial as well as scientific and physical, stating that Cornell would need to provide at least \$1,000,000 in endowment to carry its share of the burden of the new school. A graduate school of tropical agriculture, Dr. Farrand said, would do more to increase productivity in the tropics and spread prosperity and make better living conditions in backward areas than any one other institution.

THE U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey will in a short time put into operation at its observatory at Cheltenham, Md., the new seismometer recently developed by Dr. Frank Wenner, of the U. S. Bureau of Standards. This will be its first test at a seismological observatory. It has been operated by Dr. Wenner at the bureau during a period of four months past, during which earthquakes occurring at various parts of the earth have been recorded in a very satisfactory manner. This instrument differs in principle from others as yet in operation in this country in that the shock transmitted by the earth to the instrument is recorded not directly but through a galvanometer. This makes it possible, if desired, to place the instrument in a very small building, or in a cave if necessary, and then have the recording at a convenient building elsewhere.

THE United States government has taken up its option on 22,500 acres of forest land in the Waterville Gap of the White Mountains of New Hampshire. This virtually completes the final step in adding this area to the already extensive forest reservation in that section. With this purchase the government has a total area of nearly 750 square miles of public forest in this part of the White Mountains, which is considered one of the finest scenic sections of New England. The purchase was made at a price of \$1,050,000, and became possible through adoption of the McNary-Woodruff bill, which completed its passage through Congress March 14 carrying a \$1,000,000 appropriation for the purpose.

A CONFERENCE on racial differences was held in Washington on February 25 and 26 under the auspices of the division of anthropology and psychology of the National Research Council, and the committee on problems and policies of the Social Science Research Council. According to *Eugenical News* the conference was called to consider the coordination and facilitation of research on problems of racial differences and racial changes; such problems as occur in connection with the Negro and the immigrant in relation to Whites and stocks of earlier introduction. The subject was opened by 20 minute addresses by Drs. Fay-Cooper Cole, T. Wingate Todd, Franz Boas, W. I. Thomas, M. J. Herskovits, Joseph Peterson, Thos. Woofter, Jr., and Raymond Pearl.

UNIVERSITY AND EDUCATIONAL NOTES

NEW endowment gifts for the University of Chicago, totaling \$208,250, have been announced by President Max Mason. They include \$50,000 for scholarships and fellowships in archeology from the estate of

E. L. Ryerson, \$50,000 for general endowment from J. J. Dan, of Chicago, \$25,000 without limitation as to its use from Edward L. Swift and a number of smaller gifts.

A TOTAL of \$96,245 has been received by New York University through gifts and bequests in the last two months. These include the following: From the estate of Margaret Olivia Sage, the university received \$45,000; the Nicholas Foundation, Inc., made an additional gift of \$23,600 for the William H. Nichols chemistry building fund, and anonymous, through Professor George David Stewart, \$10,000 to be used for instruction in surgery in the medical college.

IN recognition of his investigations and experiments on plants, John H. Schaffner, for many years professor of botany and formerly head of the department of botany of the Ohio State University, has been promoted to the rank of research professor of botany.

PROFESSOR GEORGE W. GORRELL has been made head of the department of mathematics at the University of Denver.

DR. BRET RATNER has been appointed clinical professor of pediatrics and lecturer in immunology at New York University and Bellevue Hospital Medical College.

DR. CECIL V. KING, formerly instructor at Columbia University, has joined the staff at Washington Square College of New York University as assistant professor of chemistry.

PROFESSOR WATSON BARTEMUS SELVAGE has been appointed associate professor of education and psychology in Washington and Lee University.

G. ALLEN MAIL has been appointed assistant entomologist at Montana State College, University of Montana, Bozeman, for one year beginning on April 1 and will assist in teaching and conducting mosquito studies in northern Montana.

DR. R. K. BUTCHART, lecturer in mathematics in the University of St. Andrews (University College, Dundee), has been appointed to the chair of mathematics at Raffles College, Singapore.

DR. CHAMPY has been nominated professor of histology in the Paris faculty of medicine in succession to the late Professor Prenant.

DISCUSSION AND CORRESPONDENCE

SCIENCE AND SECRETARIES

THE proposed transfer of the geodetic work of the U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey to the U. S. Geological Survey, for which provision is made in the bills

now before both houses of Congress as noted in *SCIENCE* for January 13 and as discussed by Dr. Geo. Otis Smith in the number for January 20, involves a principle quite apart from the merits of the proposed administrative change. It is one which should interest all scientists who recognize the very important rôle played by the bureaus of the government in promoting or retarding scientific research.

The question is who should pass upon the conditions affecting the efficiency of research. Are the administrative secretaries in charge of departments competent to do so? It would not be difficult to cite evidence that they commonly are not. Many of them demonstrate abilities of a high order as administrators, but they themselves would disclaim the omniscience requisite to understand the workings of all the scientific bureaus.

The advisers of our secretaries are the heads of the individual bureaus and they naturally have their individual points of view. They are specialists, whose purpose is intensified and narrowed by the responsibility for the development of the work intrusted to each of them separately. They are worthy of all respect, but they can not be credited with a disinterested judgment regarding the relative abilities of their own organization or another's to carry out a particular scientific task.

In any proposal for reorganization of administrative relations two bureaus are commonly involved and often two departments, as in the present case. The two secretaries may agree, but the bureau chiefs may probably differ, as the heads of the respective surveys actually do. It is evident that there is need of independent, unbiased, adequately informed opinion as to the effects of any such transfer upon the efficiency of the research in progress.

The National Academy of Science is by law the adviser of the Government in scientific questions. It comprises in its membership specialists in all branches of science. Among them are men whose judgment would command the respect of their colleagues at home and abroad and also that of their fellow countrymen who take an intelligent interest in the service our great government bureaus render the people.

Scientists may reasonably claim that research shall be organized according to the recommendations of those most competent to judge its needs and that changes in administration of our government bureaus, where they affect scientific activities shall be referred to the National Academy of Science for an expression of opinion by competent judges before they are made on administrative grounds.

At the Cleveland meeting of the Geological Society of America resolutions were passed recommending that the proposed transfer of the geodetic and seismo-