

### THE U. S. COAST AND GEODETIC SURVEY AND THE AMERICAN ENGINEERING COUNCIL

THE American Engineering Council has announced that it will actively oppose legislation in Congress to transfer the geodetic work of the United States Coast Guard and Geodetic Survey from the Department of Commerce to the Department of the Interior.

The council acted upon a report of its president, Arthur W. Berresford, who made an investigation of the situation, coming to the conclusion that there is little advantage and much potential disadvantage in the proposal. He states that:

The Geodetic Survey is a division of the government activities, insignificant in numbers and cost (forty-five employees and \$112,800 appropriation), but of major importance in performance and possibilities.

Its ambition is the ultimate of exactness in its field, and therein its members may fairly be classed with those scientists who, in the fields of chemistry, electricity, light and other divisions of physical research, are striving to add to the world's store of exact knowledge. Really precise work can be done only by men whose ambition it is, and who glory in the accomplishment achieved at the expense of painstaking in a degree which, to the average man, would be utter drudgery and a thing to be shirked.

The Geodetic Survey is made up of such men. They are located where the necessity for such work as they do is understood and where it is of major importance, and where continuous and adequate recognition is given.

It is no criticism of the Geological Survey to say that these are not its standards. They should not be. Their work, from the surveyor's viewpoint, calls for no such accuracy.

It is the opinion of Mr. Berresford that while the work of both is based upon surveying, there is no actual relation between the work of the Geological and Geodetic Surveys. The work of both surveys can be coordinated when necessary, but the fact that both are land surveys is no reason for combining them. The work of the Geodetic Survey is only about 60 per cent. completed and the present force must be retained.

### SCIENTIFIC NOTES AND NEWS

JOHN MERLE COULTER, professor of botany in the University of Chicago, died on December 24 in his seventy-eighth year. Since his retirement, Dr. Coulter has been botanical adviser to the Boyce Thompson Institute at Yonkers, N. Y.

HENRY B. FINE, professor of mathematics and dean of the departments of science at Princeton University, died on December 21, at the age of seventy years.

Professor Fine suffered injuries from an automobile while riding a bicycle.

DR. IRVING LANGMUIR, assistant director of the General Electric Research Laboratory at Schenectady, has been elected president of the American Chemical Society.

DR. MAX PLANCK, professor of physics at the University of Berlin, has celebrated his seventieth birthday. To commemorate this occasion his friends and colleagues have founded a gold medal to be awarded for distinguished work in theoretical physics.

DR. E. D. ADRIAN, lecturer on physiology at Cambridge, has been appointed one of the Foulerton professors of the Royal Society in succession to the late Professor Starling.

THE Pennsylvania Society of New York has conferred its gold medal on Dr. William W. Keen, of Philadelphia.

PROFESSOR ARTHUR H. COMPTON, of the University of Chicago, has been awarded the gold medal of the Radiological Society of North America for his studies of the nature of X-rays, the work which won him the Nobel prize.

THE Perkin Medal meeting of the Society of Chemical Industry, the American Chemical Society, the Société de Chimie Industrielle and the American Electrochemical Society will be held on January 4, when the medal will be presented to Mr. Eugene C. Sullivan. An informal dinner, at 7 P. M., will precede the meeting, after which the following program will be presented in Rumford Hall of the Chemists' Club at 8:15 P. M. "Early Days of the Medallist," Alfred H. White; "Accomplishments of the Medallist," Dr. Arthur L. Day; Presentation of Perkin Medal, Dr. William H. Nichols; Acceptance speech, Eugene C. Sullivan.

AT the annual meeting of the New York Academy of Sciences the A. Cressy Morrison prize of \$500 was awarded to B. P. Gerasimovic, of the Harvard College Observatory, and Donald H. Menzel, of the Lick Observatory, for a thesis on "Subatomic Energy and Stellar Radiation." A second prize of \$250 was awarded to Herbert Ruckes for a paper on "Truss and Arch Analogies in Chelonian Osteology."

THE honorary degree of doctor of science was conferred on Dr. James W. McBain, professor of chemistry in Stanford University, by the University of Bristol this summer when he was in England. Professor McBain had been on the faculty of that university for twenty years, during the last seven of