

In addition to this information a statement from the Navy Department says that the expedition this year proposes to set up its apparatus in the vicinity of Iloilo in Panay and will receive the cooperation of the Manila Observatory in selecting the exact site. The Manila Observatory, under the direction of Father Selfa, is known for its work in the meteorology of the Philippine Islands.

A tender will be assigned for the use of the expedition upon its arrival in the Philippines, and also an expert motion picture photographer and the necessary mechanics and helpers will be attached to the party from the Asiatic Fleet.

This year's eclipse, which takes place during the afternoon of May 9, is of exceptional importance on account of its long duration, the maximum duration of totality being over five minutes. Although wholly invisible in the United States, in fact taking place in the dark hours of the eighth of May, the eclipse stretches its beam of darkness over widely separate land areas from the northwestern end of Sumatra, across the Malay State of Kedah, across Siam and southern Cambodia, and finally over the middle group of islands of the Philippines between Luzon to the north and Mindanao to the south, including the important cities of Iloilo, the second in size in the Philippines, and Cebu, where Magellan met his death in his round-the-world cruise.

The observatory's expedition, in addition to special observations on its own part, is duplicating certain features of the program arranged for the party from the Sproul Observatory of Swarthmore College which will go to Sumatra. An interesting comparison of data is in prospect, if both parties are favored with clear weather. Several other expeditions are to cover the many phases of this exceptional eclipse. British expeditions from Greenwich and Cambridge are in prospect. Four German expeditions are planned, one from Hamburg possibly operating in the Philippines. Then there are Dutch, French and Italian expeditions in preparation and possibly one from Australia.

The corona effects of this eclipse will not repeat themselves for another quarter of a century. It is, therefore, the corona that will receive intensive study this year. Besides a study of the Einstein problem, the various programs contemplate spectrophotometry of the chromosphere and corona both in the red and in the ultra-violet, a study of solar radiation near and through totality, experiments to test the effect of totality on radio transmission, relative intensities of the lines of the coronal spectrum, improved measurement of the wave-lengths for the coronal lines with a spectrograph of high dispersion, examination for displacement of the dark lines of the outer corona with a slit spectroscope of high dispersion, a study of

coronal rotation with a falling plate spectrograph and interferometer and with a quartz spectrograph, and other features, including a special study of the shadow-band phenomenon.

THE HARVARD UNIVERSITY EXPEDITION TO STUDY TROPICAL MEDICINE IN YUCATAN

AN expedition which may throw new light upon the Mayan civilization started on February 1 for Yucatan from the department of tropical medicine of the Harvard Medical School and School of Public Health.

The immediate purpose of the expedition is to make a medical survey of the population of a section of that country. The Carnegie Foundation of Washington has appropriated funds and will bear a portion of the expense of the expedition.

The region selected is about Chichen Itza where is situated a famous sacrificial well of the aborigines. There are villages of mixed population in the neighborhood and others of practically pure-blooded Maya Indians. Little is known of the diseases of these people and it is hoped that the study may throw light upon the causes of the complete collapse of the Maya civilization which followed close upon the Spanish conquest.

The "Yucatan Medical Expedition" will have its headquarters among the ruins of the ancient city at Chichen Itza where, for some years, the Carnegie Foundation has maintained a station for archeological research. Mr. Sylvanus G. Morley, who is now on the ground, has charge of the station and of the archeological work being done there. Mr. A. V. Kidder, of Andover, made the preliminary arrangements with the Department of Tropical Medicine on behalf of the foundation.

The personnel of the Medical Expedition is as follows: Dr. George C. Shattuck, in charge; Dr. Joseph C. Bequaert, entomologist, and Dr. Jack H. Sandground, parasitologist, all of the Department of Tropical Medicine of the School of Public Health; Dr. Kenneth Goodner, bacteriologist, of the department of bacteriology of the Harvard Medical School, and Mr. Byron L. Bennett, laboratory technician.

THE ADMINISTRATION BUILDING OF THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

THE corner-stone of the main administration building of the Department of Agriculture in Washington was laid just before noon on Monday, January 14, by Secretary W. M. Jardine in the presence of Senators and Representatives in Congress and many of the members of the staff.

Secretary Jardine presided at the ceremony. In response to his invitation, Senator Capper and Representatives Haugen and Dickinson made brief talks,

all expressing their satisfaction at the prospect that the Department of Agriculture, now scattered throughout the District of Columbia in many buildings, is soon to have a unified and adequate housing for its business and activities in the National Capital.

Following the remarks by the members of Congress, Secretary Jardine delivered an address. He sketched briefly the history of the Department of Agriculture and the needs of the department for housing which the new construction will meet. Regarding the new building he said:

This central unit which connects the two wings will be ready for occupancy about May of next year, at a cost of \$2,000,000. It will have a floor space of 73,000 square feet, and together with the two wings will give the completed building 229,000 square feet. This central unit will house only the administrative forces.

Fortunately, provision has been made for the construction also of the first unit of the extensible building south of B Street. This unit, which will cover an entire city block, will furnish an additional 320,000 square feet of space, and \$5,750,000 has been authorized for the construction of the entire extensible building. It will later be extended by the addition of wings east and west over two more city blocks.

When this building program is completed we will have what promises to be adequate accommodation, at least for a considerable time. It will then no longer be necessary for the department to pay something like \$200,000 a year for unsatisfactory accommodation, and then, for the first time in its history, the department will have a physical plant in Washington suited to the needs of its growing and vitally important work.

This building has been designed with a dignity and simplicity very appropriate for the national headquarters for work in agriculture. Twelve Corinthian columns of white marble will be a striking feature of the central unit, which, along with the two wings, will be built of white marble. The entire building will have a marble frontage of 750 feet. Its interior will be substantial and serviceable for offices, libraries and laboratories, but without elaborate or ornate finish.

SCIENTIFIC NOTES AND NEWS

DR. THOMAS BURR OSBORNE, since 1886 research chemist in the Connecticut Experiment Station, distinguished for research on the chemistry of the vegetable proteins and related subjects, died on January 29 in his seventieth year.

PROFESSOR A. A. MICHELSON, of the University of Chicago, and Dr. R. A. Millikan, of the California Institute of Technology, will receive the gold medals of the Society of Arts and Sciences at a dinner at the Biltmore Hotel, New York, on February 22. The medals have been awarded for distinguished service in

science. Mr. Gerard Swope will be toastmaster and the speakers will include a number of scientific men and industrial leaders.

DR. GEORGE D. BIRKHOFF, professor of mathematics in Harvard University, has been elected a corresponding member of the French Academy of Sciences.

DR. LUDVIG HEKTOEN, chairman of the department of pathology of the University of Chicago and director of the McCormick Institute for Infectious Diseases, was elected at the recent New York meeting president of the Society of American Bacteriologists.

OFFICERS for the year 1929 have been elected by the Philosophical Society of Washington as follows: *President*, Leason H. Adams, Geophysical Laboratory; *corresponding secretary*, Edgar W. Woolard, George Washington University; *recording secretary*, Oscar S. Adams, Coast and Geodetic Survey; *treasurer*, O. H. Gish, Department of Terrestrial Magnetism.

PROFESSOR E. J. STIRNIMAN, of the agricultural engineering division of the University of California, was named chairman of the Pacific Coast section of the American Society of Agricultural Engineers at its recent annual meeting. W. L. Paul, of San Francisco, was made first vice-president; G. P. Smith, University of Arizona, second vice-president; W. L. Power, Oregon State College, third vice-president, and W. W. Weir, University of California, secretary-treasurer.

THE annual meeting of the American Institute of Mining and Metallurgical Engineers will be held from February 18 to 21, inclusive, and will include, among other features, an all-day symposium on corrosion. The meeting will close with a lecture by U. R. Evans, of Cambridge, England, on "The Passivity of Metals and its Relation to Problems of Corrosion." The sessions will be held in the auditorium of the American Institute of Mining and Metallurgical Engineers, 29 West 39th Street, New York City.

AFTER thirty years of gratuitous service the original editorial board of *Rhodora*, journal of the New England Botanical Club, has asked to be relieved and the council of the club has appointed a new board to continue the journal. The new editors are Merritt Lyndon Fernald, editor-in-chief; James Franklin Collins, Charles Alfred Weatherby, Ludlow Griscom and Carroll William Dodge, associate editors. Manuscripts for consideration should be sent to M. L. Fernald, 14 Hawthorn Street; subscriptions to Ludlow Griscom, Museum of Comparative Zoology, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

SCOTT TURNER, director of the U. S. Bureau of Mines, has been designated by Secretary of Commerce