to research, will be exempt from tuition fees and will have no service or teaching duties. It seems fitting that the first nomination to the Coulter Fellowship is to be made within a very few months of the death of the great teacher whose memory it perpetuates.

Another movement to honor Professor Coulter culminated on the evening of December 28, 1928, when the president of the Botanical Society of America, Professor A. H. R. Buller, presented to Mrs. Coulter a memorial volume containing the names and the appreciative letters of hundreds of Professor Coulter's botanical friends. The volume was accompanied by a silver tea service. The gifts were received by Dr. Wm. Crocker, acting on behalf of Mrs. Coulter.

While all regret that Professor Coulter did not live to see the culmination of these efforts to do him honor, it is some satisfaction to remember that he was aware of the completion of the John M. Coulter Research Fellowship Fund and of the compilation of the memorial volume by the members of the Botanical Society, and that he expressed his high appreciation of these tokens of affection coming from his pupils and his friends.

GEO. D. FULLER

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SCIENTIFIC EVENTS

BIOLOGICAL ABSTRACTS

THE following is a somewhat abbreviated statement of the points brought out in a report on the progress of *Biological Abstracts* presented to the council of the American Association at the fifth New York meeting, by Professor Herbert Osborn, representative of the association on the board of trustees of *Biological Abstracts*. The journal has been promoted by the Union of American Biological Societies and has received support from the Rockefeller Foundation, which has contributed $50,000 per annum to be available during a period of seven years. In addition, the project receives subscriptions from institutions and individuals, reported to have aggregated $41,860.37 for the period from July 1, 1926, to April 20, 1928. Ten issues have been published, Volume I being complete, except for the index, and Volume II started. The scope and complexity of this project are indicated by the following quotations from a statement recently made by the editor-in-chief, Dr. J. R. Schramm.

1. The literature is extremely widely scattered and consequently more difficult and costly to assemble than that of other fields, as evidenced by the fact that some 6,000 serials must be perused to make the journal fairly complete. (*Chemical Abstracts* at present abstracts from 1,250 periodicals.)

2. No other science begins to present the complex indexing problem presented by biology, largely because of the enormous extent of taxonomic literature. It now requires six persons, part scientifically trained and part clerical, to do the indexing of systematic botany and zoology alone, and this staff may require additional slight increase. It is generally conceded, however, that the indexing procedure in *Biological Abstracts* is limited to the necessary.

3. The subject is more diversified than that of any of the other major scientific fields, biology being to a larger degree the meeting ground of all the natural sciences. The central staff must necessarily be larger and more diversified in its training.

The editor-in-chief has made the following statements concerning the progress already made, in the light of the original plans and estimations. It was estimated that the literature to be abstracted would total about 40,000 titles annually and there is as yet no reason for modifying this estimate, though probably the number will eventually be larger. It was estimated that abstracts would be printed at the rate of twelve per page, of the format and typography finally adopted, and the average for Volume I is 11.3. The cost of printing the text was somewhat overestimated, but no statement can yet be made concerning the indexes. It was estimated that the editorial work would cost $75,000 annually and it appears that that amount may suffice for the next few years.

It is too early to predict the degree of completeness that may be achieved in this valuable service to biologists, but a very excellent beginning has been made and the enterprise surely deserves the hearty support of the association and of all members interested in biological work.

BURTON E. LIVINGSTON,
Permanent Secretary

MECHANICAL STANDARDS ADVISORY COUNCIL

SIXTY organizations having an interest in standardization in the mechanical engineering field were invited to join the Mechanical Standards Advisory Council. A large percentage of them accepted and sent official delegates to represent them at the permanent organization meeting which was held on Monday, December 3, in the Engineering Societies Building, New York.

What to standardize, when to standardize and how to standardize, to the general economic advantage and without embarrassment to the financially concerned interests in the mechanical field, are the basic questions which the mechanical industries undertook to solve.

The functions of the council, as outlined in the constitution adopted at the meeting, are as follows:

1. To endeavor to obtain, at the request of any interested group, the desired cooperation of organizations in any standardization project in the mechanical field.
2. To confer with any organization in the mechanical field interested in or carrying on work which eventually may be presented for action under the rules of procedure of the American Standards Association.
3. To advise the American Standards Association on questions of policy relating to standardization applying to products of the mechanical industries.
4. To serve as a general coordinating medium in the mechanical field, within the scope of the constitution, by-laws and rules of procedure of the American Standards Association.
5. To consider—
   (a) the desirability and practicability of standardization projects within its field,
   (b) the order in which standards shall be developed,
   (c) the scope of projects,
   (d) sponsorships for the necessary sectional committees, and
   (e) the adjustment of conflicts and the clearing up of ambiguities.
6. To follow up and expedite work in the development of standards.

In accordance with its constitution, the council voted to designate the representatives of the Society of Automotive Engineers, the National Machine Tool Builders Association, the American Standards Association, the Manufacturers Standardization Society of the Valve and Fittings Industry, the American Society for Testing Materials and the American Society of Mechanical Engineers as the executive committee of the new council.

The meeting recently held followed two preceding conferences of April 7, 1926, and June 20, 1928. The first conference, called by the society, answered the questions of "how to standardize" by unanimously determining that the procedure of the American Standards Association (formerly known as the American Engineering Standards Committee) is the method which should be employed in developing and promulgating a standard of sufficient scope to seriously affect more than a single group of interests.

The second conference decided upon "what and when to standardize" by approving the recommendations of the first conference's special plan and scope committee that such functions should rest with industry itself and by creating a temporary executive committee with power to further develop a basic instrument or constitution for the necessary organization, to be known as the Mechanical Standards Advisory Council, and also to call a meeting at which this council would be organized upon a permanent basis.

THE SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA RIFT CLUB

THE Rift Club meets several times a year at localities where faults are shown, for study and discussion. For the winter meeting the adjacent Death and Panamint Valleys of eastern California were selected, and a detailed road and camping schedule covering four days from December 27 to 30 was prepared. Over fifty people made the trip, in a caravan of twenty-one motor cars, under the leadership of Mr. R. B. Peters, of San Bernardino, club president, and Professor J. E. Wolff, of Harvard University (retired), arranger of the program.

Death and Panamint Valleys are narrow troughs extending north and south between lofty mountain ranges. Each range is a tilted fault block, with a steep compound fault escarpment as its western boundary. The party studied numerous component scarps of these systems, some cutting across alluvial fans. It was also noticed that the alluvial fans on the west side of each valley are broken by north-south faults, each with upthrow on the fanhead side. A noteworthy prospect was that west from Dante's View, including both Death Valley, below sea-level and the lowest point in America, and in the far distance Mt. Whitney, the highest point in the United States. These great differences of elevation are the result of geologically recent movements or faults.

Death, Panamint and adjacent valleys are more or less completely closed basins. A rather recent event in their geologic history has been the formation and subsequent desiccation of great lakes, whose shorelines and saline deposits remain in testimony. The Rift Club noted vague shore-lines in Death Valley, clearer cases in Panamint Valley, and the perfect terrace above "Searles Lake" west of Panamint Valley.

The trip closed with a circuit of the great potash and borax works at Trona, where the brines pumped from beneath the dry floor of "Searles Lake" are fractionally crystallized to rob them of their more valuable constituents. This opportunity, and the turkey dinner which followed, the club owed to the courtesy of the American Potash and Chemical Company. The club had previously been accorded the great privileges of wood and water at every possible point, and even freedom from toll over Townsend Pass. The desert hospitality was much appreciated.

THE RIO GRANDE NATIONAL FOREST

THE Forest Service of the United States Department of Agriculture regards the Rio Grande National