

Two forestry bills are being considered by the legislature of New York State. One of these amends the conservation law to give the state power to purchase large areas of non-agricultural lands, suitable for forest growth, outside of the forest preserve, for reforestation purposes. The other bill provides for the acquisition by counties within their boundaries of such tracts of less than 500 acres, the state to contribute to such purchases a share equal to that contributed by the county, but not in excess of \$5,000 for any county in any one year. The state, under the terms of this latter bill, would also supply the trees to the counties. All the work would be under the supervision of the State Department of Conservation.

At the annual meeting of the New York Zoological Society the following resolutions were passed:

WHEREAS, One of the primary objects of the New York Zoological Society is the preservation of our native American animals; and

WHEREAS, The indiscriminate killing of predatory animals without a thorough study of their value in any given area is unscientific and unfair; and

WHEREAS, The introduction of exotic species may become a dangerous factor in disturbing the balance and natural condition of our native American game; therefore, be it

Resolved, That the New York Zoological Society, while recognizing the fact that a certain control of predatory animals is at times necessary, is strongly opposed to the extermination of any single species of our American wild life; and, be it further

Resolved, That the federal government be urged to adopt for our National Parks a policy whereby all the wild life should be studied intensively with a view to determine scientifically to what extent its regulation is advisable, and that the policy of destroying the predatory animals be suspended until such policy has been considered, and that this society tender its services to the national government for the purpose of aiding in the efforts to reach a proper decision; and, be it further

Resolved, That the New York Zoological Society strongly opposes the introduction of non-native animals into our National Parks and urges the National Parks service to prohibit all such introductions.

THE ninth annual report of the Council of the Institute of Agricultural Botany, as abstracted in the *London Times*, describes improvements made during the year ended September 30, 1928, in the council's property at Cambridge, and mentions that the vast part of the trial ground, which was taken over in a very dirty state in 1927, was so well cleaned that it bore creditable crops of cereals in 1928. The problem of growing so many varieties of cereals year by year on a small area can only be solved, the report points out, by the adoption of an unusual rotation, but the size of the yields and the quality of the grain grown on the trial ground in recent years bear witness to its

success. During the season the station tested 26,583 "routine samples" and 3,410 "investigational samples," an increase of 14 per cent. on the previous year's tests. The report adds: "The bad harvest of 1927 introduced considerable difficulties into the testing of most kinds of seeds, and in cereals it led to a more general recognition of the fact that germination tests demand greater skill than is commonly believed. Though these factors all added to the work of the station and involved a large body of routine investigations, the tests were made and reports issued without any falling away from the standard of rapidity and accuracy for which the station has now an established reputation."

THE Brussels correspondent of the *Journal* of the American Medical Association reports that in beginning his course in pathologic anatomy at the new institutes of the Faculté de médecine in Brussels, Professor Dustin expressed himself somewhat as follows: "During the war, two members of our faculty (Drs. Depage and Sand) traveled in the United States, and on their visit noted many evidences of the sympathetic interest that the people manifested in our country. We knew therefore that we could count on generous aid from that source. But the Americans have given their aid to other nations besides ourselves, and if they have aided Belgium in a particular way, it is because they had a high appreciation of the great part that Belgium played during the great struggle. The Rockefeller Foundation bestowed on the University of Brussels some of its largest gifts because the university is liberal and not controlled by any philosophical or religious tendencies. Another thing that contributed greatly to dispose the Americans in our favor was what we accomplished during the war; notably, the model hospital (the ambulance from the ocean to La Panne) and its scientific laboratories, which carried on its work for four years within a few kilometers of the front line trenches. It was the quality of work performed there that brought the Belgian investigators to their attention. Do not forget, ladies and gentlemen, that if, at the close of your studies, you leave this, our university, technically and morally equipped to perform in an outstanding manner the professional tasks that await you, it is in great part due to the aid given by the Rockefeller Foundation."

UNIVERSITY AND EDUCATIONAL NOTES

EDWARD S. HARKNESS has given to Columbia University \$2,000,000 for the erection of a residence hall near the new medical center on Washington Heights, for medical students and junior unmarried hospital officers.

By the will of Mrs. Katie M. A. Grimmons, of Somerville, Massachusetts, provision is made for the creation of a \$150,000 trust fund, the income to be used for scholarships to be given to students at Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

JULIUS ROSENWALD, of Chicago, has given \$250,000 toward the endowment fund of the American University of Beirut, Syria.

THE contest in the courts of the will of the late W. J. McDonald, of Paris, Texas, who left in 1926 almost his entire estate to found an astronomical observatory in connection with the University of Texas, has been settled by a compromise. In place of the \$1,200,000 originally bequeathed, a little less than \$900,000 is secured to the observatory by the compromise. The Board of Regents of the university has full power to use this fund at once or later to advance astronomical knowledge in any way that they may deem wise. It being known that Mr. McDonald at times contemplated the accumulation of the fund over a number of years before the actual establishment of the observatory, the regents will proceed with plans very slowly and in accordance with advice from leading astronomers.

THE University of Chicago announces the appointment of Dr. Russell M. Wilder, of the Mayo Clinic, Rochester, Minnesota, as professor and chairman of the department of medicine, to succeed, as chairman, Dr. Franklin C. McLean, whose appointment as director of university clinics was recently announced.

THE Vanderbilt University School of Medicine, Nashville, Tennessee, announces the appointment of Dr. William Groce Harrison, of Birmingham, Alabama, as lecturer in the history of medicine. Dr. Harrison will begin his work in September.

DR. JOHN ARTHUR THOMSON, regius professor of natural history at the University of Aberdeen, will join the staff of the University of California at Los Angeles next year as visiting professor of biology.

DISCUSSION AND CORRESPONDENCE

IS LIFE QUANTITY?

It is, answers Mrs. Augusta Gaskell. Her answer is based on atomic physics, although she is not an experimental physicist. She is, however, a broad and careful reader in that field. This is attested both by her book, "What is Life?" and by the distinguished physicist, K. T. Compton, who introduces her.

Nor is she an experimental biologist although likewise an extensive reader in parts of that field. Fur-

thermore, her answer has a tentative backing from this side also by the distinguished biologist, Raymond Pearl.

Surely then her answer deserves serious consideration, for she and her introducers, like everybody else, recognize it to be an answer to a question than which no other concerns human kind more deeply.

That which entitles this answer above the hundreds of others the question has received to the attention of scientists is the claim by the author and her technical sponsors that here at last is an answer susceptible of being tested by laboratory experiments.

I venture the opinion that not only can this new answer not be really tested, thus, but that were it objectively true no answer to any scientific question could be so tested.

This sweeping rejection of the hypothesis that life is quantity is based on the recognition that the assumption that quantity *alone* can constitute and can explain any natural phenomenon is an assumption which would place that phenomenon outside the realm of human knowledge.

All natural knowledge whether gained inside or outside of the laboratory necessarily involves observation. This is granted as an idea and adhered to in practice by experimentalists without exception.

Likewise it is both ideationally and practically granted that at least three parts of the human organism are directly and indispensably involved in experimental work. These are hands, eyes and brain.

From these facts it certainly follows, though apparently obscurely for many workers, that all human knowledge is directly and inseparably tied to two classes of psychobiological phenomena. These are sense perception and ideation.

But now comes a proposition which though demonstrably true, I believe, is far from generally granted or recognized as possibly true. It is that quantity and quality are so linked together and interpenetrated in the make-up of natural bodies, and consequently in our knowledge of them, that neither can be conceived (except in pure fancy) to exist apart from the other.

The cosmic order, ourselves and everything else being included, is such as to compel our recognition sooner or later that quality and quantity form a continuum similar, so far as inseparableness is concerned, to the space-time continuum of Einsteinian relativity.

The road of justification for this statement is long, steep and stony, but yet "passable though dangerous" as highway signs often read.

It is blazed, inadequately, in "The Organismal Conception"¹ and can not be traveled at all here. One

¹ Ritter and Bailey, Univ. of Calif. Publ. Zool., Vol. 31, No. 14, pp. 307-358, 1928.