

RECENT DEATHS

DR. RICHARD BISHOP MOORE, dean of the College of Chemistry of Purdue University, and an authority on the use of radium in treating disease, died on January 20. Dr. Moore was fifty-nine years old.

ELMER HOWARD LOOMIS, professor emeritus of physics at Princeton University, died on January 22, at the age of sixty-nine years.

DR. OREN HOWARD COBB, for the last eighteen years superintendent of the Syracuse State School for Mental Defectives, died on January 24. He was fifty years old.

MR. JOHN CLACEY, for many years optician at the National Bureau of Standards, died on January 12 at Washington, D. C. Mr. Clacey was one of the last of the old school of opticians, and before joining the staff of the bureau made many of the fine lenses in use in observatories of this country and abroad. Among the historical instruments made by Mr. Clacey is

Chandler's almucantar with which the discovery of the variation of latitude was made. A brief account of his career appeared in *Popular Astronomy* for October, 1930.

Nature reports the following deaths: A. A. T. Brachet, For.Mem.R.S., rector of the University of Brussels, and director of the laboratory of embryology of the faculty of medicine in the university, aged sixty-one years; Major E. A. FitzGerald, author of "Climbs in the New Zealand Alps" and "The Highest Andes," on January 2, aged fifty-nine years; Professor Hans Kniep, director of the Institute of Plant Physiology at Berlin-Dahlem, on November 17, aged forty-nine years; Mr. H. A. Lowe, honorary fellow of the Textile Institute, who discovered in 1899 the process of "tensioning" mercerized cotton fiber on December 26, and Professor T. Wibberley, formerly Harrington professor of agricultural research, University College, Cork, who was known for his work on the breeding and introduction of new varieties of oats and wheat, on December 22, aged fifty years.

SCIENTIFIC EVENTS

CALENDAR REFORM

THE London correspondent of the *Christian Science Monitor* reports that the Council of the League of Nations has decided to invite all nations to discuss simplification of the calendar by international conference on October 26 next.

The three undisputed defects of the present calendar are: Unequal months, changing of week-day names for monthly dates, drifting dates for Easter and other church festivals.

The method which has found most approval is the division of the year into 13 months of 28 days each (the odd day to be an additional public holiday).

Every month would then be like February, 1931, in which the four Sundays fall on 1, 8, 15, 22 and the month is one of four weeks. Every fourth year Leap-day instead of being on February 29 would be in summer on June 29. The year-day, that is, the odd day of the 13 months, would be on December 29, and Christmas Day and holidays would all be fixed for Mondays, thus giving the workers the benefit of long week-ends.

By absorbing the last 13 days of June and the first 15 days of July the 28-day month would gather up all twenty-ninth, thirtieth and thirty-first days. All church festivals would be fixed, Easter Sunday being always on April 15 and Whitsunday on June 8.

Every month would therefore have a permanent economic value. The day of the week would always indicate the monthly date, and *vice versa*. Pay days, markets and meetings would recur on the same

monthly dates. Weekly wages and expenses would be harmonized with monthly rents and accounts. Accounts and drafts would never fall due on Sundays. Permanent monthly dates for recurring fixtures in all walks of life would be established. All periods for earning or spending would be either equal or exact multiples of each other. Every month-end would coincide with the week-end most conveniently for business, rents and general affairs. Great statistical advantages would be secured by the ability to truly measure current fluctuations in government, export and business affairs.

A report of the national committee of the United States gives a percentage of 98.3 in favor of the 13 month calendar. This figure is obtained from a questionnaire submitted to 480 organizations. A number of large concerns both in Britain and the United States use private simplified calendars of 13 periods and 4-week months of 28 days.

In Germany there is evidence of much interest in calendar reform and Professor Erich Przybyllok, the Königsberg astronomer, has declared that little can be achieved without a publicity campaign. He finds all the Protestant churches in favor of reform; Jewish orthodox circles are agreeable to any change acceptable to the majority; the Roman Catholic Church is apparently against all alteration. He is of opinion that once the public understands the great advantages to be gained the weight of feeling will bring about the change.