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THE NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES¹

By Dr. W. W. CAMPBELL

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

ONE year ago, our committee on program and arrangements for the annual meeting of 1932 asked me, as the then new president, to deliver an address, of a specified length, at the annual dinner, and I did so. To the best of my knowledge, that was an innovation—a supplement to the prevailing type of dinner program. This year the committee repeated the invitation, perhaps largely because last year I respected the wisely specified time limit, with three minutes to spare. But I have a purpose in these preliminary remarks. As two points fix the direction of a straight line, so two presidential addresses in successive years may go far in establishing a custom. Fortunately, the membership of the academy is highly individualistic, and is always ready and quick to express its views. I need say no more.

It was gratifying, last week, to observe that the deep depression in the curve representing the recent course of financial and economic events in our coun-

¹ Address of the president at the annual dinner of the National Academy of Sciences, Washington, D. C., April 25, 1933.

try is apparently not matched by a similar depression in the curve depicting the output of new knowledge, achieved through research, in the domain of the physical and biologic sciences. The number of papers offered for the program of this week's meeting was uniquely large, and to accommodate them it was found necessary to hold duplicate sessions, one in this auditorium and the other in the lecture room, on all our four half days, as you will have observed. The high quality of the papers anticipated from the authors' names has been amply confirmed in their reading. These facts in relation to the academy's program are, I believe, in accord with the advance in knowledge made in our nation, as a whole, through research, as indicated by papers and volumes, rich in contents, published in the last year or two. I take special delight in adding that we have been extremely fortunate in the qualities of the papers presented in response to personal invitations issued to several guests by the academy's committee on program: Professor Vegard, professor of physics in the University of

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