

## QUOTATIONS

### ACADEMIC ASSISTANCE

UNDER the name of the Academic Assistance Council a number of men and women of high distinction have banded themselves together in the interest of those university teachers on the Continent of Europe who have lately been deprived, on political grounds, of their posts and their livelihood. The appeal addresses itself to an ancient and justly cherished English tradition of tolerance. We are accustomed in this country to trust the free working of the intellect. We may claim that our trust is based, not on any underestimate of the disruptive power of thought, but upon a faith in the essential soundness of our own institutions, sufficient to be willing to submit them to the severest of tests without fear that anything will be dissolved away but that which is superfluous, unworthy or outworn. That confidence comes only to a society that has driven its roots very deep into history; and the builders of self-consciously new polities do not possess it. Hence it comes that every revolution makes martyrs in the homes of thought. This is no question of the rightness or wrongness of a political creed. Bolshevik, Fascist, Nazi—all alike have sent professors into exile. The claim of all these exiles upon the hospitality of Englishmen is in every case the same—not the claim of the anti-Bolshevik or the anti-Nazi, but simply that of the seeker after truth.

The immediate need that the Academic Assistance Council seeks to meet is of course that of the refugees

from the present régime in Germany. The council has collected a long list of names. Many, but by no means all, are the names of Jewish scholars. That is clearly of importance to Herr Hitler; it is of none whatever to Englishmen. Here we are not concerned with whether a professor is Jew or Gentile, but whether he is to be bond or free—subservient to opinions imposed from above, or claiming the right of learning to follow whithersoever the argument may lead. In vindicating that essential liberty of the mind it is to be hoped that Great Britain will always be ready, not only with applause, but with the material help that is its corollary. British universities will no doubt be swift to offer harborage to our guests in such forms as will enable them to carry on their learned vocations. But universities are for the most part but inadequately endowed even for their own necessities. Reverence for "humaner letters" is not confined to the ranks of professional scholarship, and all who feel that sentiment should respond to the appeal now made. This is not unproductive "charity." It has been the experience of history that the persecution of learning has been the occasion of its special flourishing in the lands that have given it sanctuary. The Byzantine scholars dispersed by the Turks in 1453 sowed the seeds of the Renaissance in Western Europe, and thus repaid a hundredfold the patrons who befriended them. In some such manner we may expect value to be returned for the money which it is now proposed to collect.—*The London Times*.

## REPORTS

### FIELD CONFERENCE OF PENNSYLVANIA GEOLOGISTS

THE third annual meeting of the Field Conference of Pennsylvania Geologists was held at Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, over the week-end of May 27, 28 and 29. The total attendance of about sixty members and guests included, besides Pennsylvanians, representatives of the profession from Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Virginia and West Virginia. The Pennsylvania Topographic and Geologic Survey was host to the conference. The entire staff, consisting of George H. Ashley, *chairman*, Stanley H. Cathcart, Charles K. Graeber, William O. Hickok, IV, Forrest T. Moyer, Marchant N. Shaffner, Ralph W. Stone and Bradford Willard, *secretary*, served as the local committee and planned and carried out the two and one-half day program, a brief summary of which follows.

Those who arrived by Saturday noon, May 27, were given a choice of three trips. The first, under Mr. Graeber, went to the Cornwall iron mines and spent the afternoon there collecting minerals and studying the geology of this historic mining center. Dr. Hickok led a second trip, whose members, after a shorter visit to Cornwall, saw some of the Triassic igneous and sedimentary rocks near-by and certain metamorphic phases caused by Triassic igneous intrusions of the Triassic sediments and Lower Paleozoics. This trip concluded with a visit to the once famous but now abandoned brownstone quarries at Hummelstown. The third Saturday afternoon trip was in charge of Dr. Ashley. This party climbed Third Mountain about ten miles north of Harrisburg to see the overturned syncline of Pottsville conglomerate there exposed as the western tip of the Southern Anthracite Coal Field. This party also

observed important physiographic features of the Susquehanna Valley region with particular reference to peneplanation.

On Sunday, May 28, the whole conference united for a sixty-five mile tour of the Susquehanna and Juniata valleys. Dr. Willard was in charge of this excursion. The entire Paleozoic column from the Middle Ordovician through complete Silurian and Devonian exposures up to and including the Upper Mississippian was seen, Appalachian structures were observed, stratigraphic problems discussed and fossiliferous localities visited. Dr. Ashley drew the attention of the party to points of physiographic interest and to the river terraces and gravels of Pleistocene or Recent ages. This trip covered in a more extended form the Middle and Upper Paleozoic section to be visited by the International Geological Congress next July on Trip 1-B.

A choice of two trips was offered on Monday, May 29. Mr. Stone and Dr. Hiekok led a party through portions of Cumberland and Adams counties where the chief interests were in economic geology including tile and ornamental stone works. Much also was seen of the Precambrian complex of South Mountain, and visits were made to certain ancient iron mines

long since in disuse. Simultaneously with the foregoing, Dr. Willard conducted a second trip on Monday. Observations on this tour dealt entirely with stratigraphic problems. Those selecting this excursion visited several Silurian sections in Perry County, paying particular attention to the Ordovician-Silurian relations observable at points along Blue Mountain. The presence of Dr. Frank M. Swartz, of Pennsylvania State College, added greatly to the interest of the trip because of his thorough knowledge of the problems of the Silurian and the Helderberg, which he discussed at a number of localities.

The annual dinner was held at the Hotel Harrisburger on Saturday evening. After the meal, followed a discussion of the local geology by members of the Survey staff. On Sunday evening informal gatherings took place at the residences of Dr. Ashley and Mr. Stone. During a brief business session after the dinner an invitation was extended to the conference from its members residing in or near Pittsburgh to visit that area a year hence. The invitation was accepted by unanimous vote. The date for this meeting is tentatively set for the last week-end in May, 1934.

BRADFORD WILLARD  
*Secretary-Treasurer*

## SCIENTIFIC APPARATUS AND LABORATORY METHODS

### A SIMPLE STRING ELECTROSCOPE

THE instrument described below was developed while the authors were making a study of certain transient electrical phenomena. While there are instruments in use that are similar in general to this one, its simplicity and ease of manipulation, together

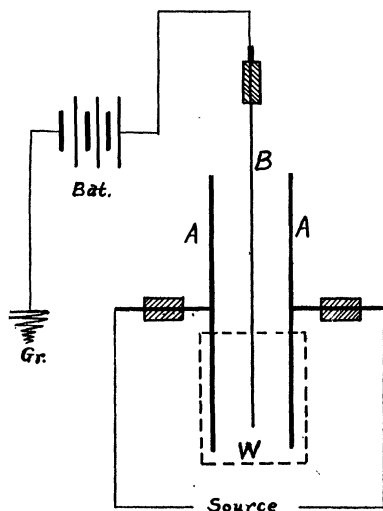


FIG. 1

with its general adaptability, seem to make a short account of it worth while.

A A in Fig. 1 are parallel brass plates about 8 cm long and 4 cm wide. They are mounted in the case of the instrument by the projecting rods as shown, so that the distance between them may be adjusted. These rods are supported by insulators of cast sulfur,<sup>1</sup> so that each plate is insulated from the case.

B is a silvered glass fiber<sup>2</sup> approximately 12 cm long hung midway between the plates from another sulfur insulator. It will be noted that the bottom end of the fiber is free.

W is a window in the case of the instrument through which the fiber may be viewed or its image projected.

In visual work the fiber may be observed through a low-powered microscope with a scale in the eyepiece. If the window is illuminated by a small arc, a sharp shadow of the fiber on a bright field may be projected

<sup>1</sup> Cast sulfur has proven to be excellent for this work. It is inexpensive and easily shaped and its insulating value is high. It deteriorates with age, and insulators made from it should be recast at intervals of 6 months or a year.

<sup>2</sup> The use of glass fibers has been surprisingly satisfactory. They are easily and quickly made and they last in service indefinitely.