

the Department of Terrestrial Magnetism of the Carnegie Institution. One of these has been actually used for experiments on atomic disintegration and the other instrument, a larger one developing upwards of 2,000,000 volts, is awaiting a suitable housing, now under construction, for its satisfactory operation. Dr. Tuve in Washington, Dr. Coolidge, of the General Electric Company, and Dr. Slack, of the Westinghouse Company, all of whom have built and experimented with Van de Graaff generators subsequent to the demonstration of Van de Graaff's first air-operated instrument in the summer of 1931, have been very helpful in reporting their experiences with the generators.

In conclusion it may fairly be said that this new type of generator as an electrical instrument has already been highly successful and shows promise of very considerable further development. It remains

to be seen whether the necessity which was the mother of this invention—namely, the desire for high speed particles for the study of atomic nuclei—will lead to important new knowledge of atomic structure with the aid of this device. Several good men are beginning work on the application of these voltages to nuclear disintegration, and it will not be long before some indications, at any rate, may be obtained as to the significance of the new developments in high voltage technique.

Whether or not the apparatus will be successful in opening up new fields of atomic investigation, it has already opened up the possibility for electrical investigations and possible practical applications of electricity in a new voltage range, and it will be surprising indeed if there are not some developments of scientific and practical significance which will eventually emerge from this new field of activity.

## SCIENTIFIC EVENTS

### THE EMERGENCY CONSERVATION PROGRAM

IN a statement issued on July 17 Robert Fechner, director of the Emergency Conservation Work, described the work being performed in the 102 camps now in operation. Seventy-four of the President's conservation camps are on state parks in nineteen states; eleven are on county parks in four states; eleven are on metropolitan sections of city park systems, and seven are on miscellaneous federal and state owned areas in two states—all under the supervision of the National Park Service.

In addition to purely forest protection work—and some of the finest forests in America are found in state parks—many miles of foot trails and bridle trails are being constructed; safe water supply and sewage disposal systems are being installed; picnic and camp grounds built and shelter structures erected; small recreation lakes impounded, as well as a great variety of other work that will add immensely to the usefulness of the areas.

The President, early in May, authorized an extensive work program for the state parks and later, by executive order, approved the extension of conservation work to county parks and to metropolitan sections of city parks. In the state parks the types of work authorized are numerous, and are necessary to safeguard the scenic resources of the parks under the heavy use to which most of them are subjected.

Supervision of Emergency Conservation Work in state, county and metropolitan parks was placed with the National Park Service because of the similarity of many of their problems and undertakings with those in the national parks. In addition, the federal agency has maintained close touch with state park

developments during the past fourteen years. Until the present, however, there has been no official connection between the National Park Service and the state park authorities. Supervision of these camps, therefore, has required the establishment of a small new field organization.

General direction of park emergency conservation work has been assigned to the branch of planning, National Park Service, headed by Conrad L. Wirth, assistant director. With him as supervisor is Herbert Evison, for the past four and a half years executive secretary of the National Conference on State Parks.

The entire United States has been divided into four districts, under four district officers, each of whom is experienced in state park work. Under their immediate direction is a field force of sixteen inspectors, each in charge of a group of from five to seven camps. These men, of whom all are graduate engineers or landscape architects, help to plan the work and keep in close touch with it through all its stages.

In some states, even where there are extensive and valuable holdings, this is the first time that technically trained men have been available for state park work. In each camp the services of the inspectors are supplemented by four landscape foremen, many of whom are experienced landscape architects. These highly qualified men are charged with responsibility for upholding generally accepted state park standards in the constructive work being performed in the parks.

### THE EMERGENCY COMMITTEE IN AID OF DISPLACED GERMAN SCHOLARS

THERE has been formed an Emergency Committee in Aid of Displaced German Scholars, with President Livingston Farrand as *chairman* and Dr. Stephen

Duggan as *secretary*. This committee will be glad to receive contributions, which should be sent to the treasurer, Mr. Fred M. Stein, 2 West 45th Street, New York City. Inquiries should be addressed to Dr. Duggan at the same address.

A statement has been issued by the committee which reads in part:

As a result of the disturbance in Germany many scholars of undoubted merit, some of them among the most distinguished in the world, have been removed from their chairs and must begin life anew with very inadequate means or with no means at all. Many will have to leave the land of their birth and seek opportunity, temporarily at least, in other lands. The situation makes a call not only upon our sympathy, but also upon our resources. In the hope that they may serve their German colleagues in the crisis, we have formed The Emergency Committee in Aid of Displaced German Scholars.

We are, however, aware that as the result of the present economic depression, university revenues in our own country have been sadly reduced and teachers have been dropped from the rolls and are suffering severe deprivation. In such a situation the universities must not be called upon for financial assistance for the benefit of foreign scholars. In most instances the aid to be extended to the latter must come from funds raised from sources outside the universities.

Some such funds have been forthcoming and have been placed at the disposal of the committee, but in view of the number of invitations that the universities would like to extend to the displaced German scholars, the amount is very inadequate. As the displaced scholars are chiefly engaged in research we have informed the universities in which they would probably find working conditions most congenial of our readiness to meet their salaries to the extent and to the number permitted by the resources at our disposal.

We wish to emphasize the emergency nature of our activity. We have not the resources to endow permanent chairs nor in view of the unemployment of our own scholars have we any desire to do so. The funds at our disposal will enable us to cooperate with a university only to the extent of establishing an honorary lectureship to which a German scholar may be invited for a period of one or at the most two years. At the close of such period all commitments on the part of the university and of this committee will cease.

We are aware of the inadequacy of the assistance we are now able to offer. It is in no way a measure of our desire to aid our German colleagues. But it is an earnest of our determination to range ourselves with scholars everywhere in maintaining the traditions of learning that have taken so long to evolve and that are now so seriously threatened. And we rejoice to be able to cooperate in this endeavor with similar committees established in the countries of western and northern Europe.

#### DISMISSALS FROM THE BUREAU OF MINES

ACCORDING to Science Service, another scientific bureau of the Federal Government suffered on July 15

when an economy edict cut off practically one fourth of the personnel in the U. S. Bureau of Mines.

About 190 to 200 employees received notice that they would be separated from the service on July 15, provided the Civil Service Commission approved. In case the commission failed to act the employees were to be placed upon indefinite furlough at that time. This means that from 25 to 30 per cent. of the present staff of the bureau is being dismissed from the government service. About 70 of these are scientific or technical personnel. Although the separations were effective on July 15, it was stated at the Civil Service Commission that the list had not been received by them on July 13.

The dismissals were made necessary by a drastic reduction in funds. Of the \$1,514,300 appropriated by the congress for the Bureau of Mines, \$414,300 has been withheld by the Secretary of Commerce, who allotted but \$1,100,000 to the bureau for the coming fiscal year. This is a 27.3 per cent. reduction in funds.

All field offices and stations of the bureau are affected by this drastic cut. Some are being abolished entirely; all will have the scope of their activities curtailed. The health division of the bureau is being abolished, and the officers who have been assigned there from the Public Health Service are being returned to the service. The helium division is being merged with the petroleum and natural gas division.

The offices of the bureau have been quietly moved from the new building of the Department of Commerce to the building of the Interior Department. Officials of the bureau said in answer to inquiry, however, that they had not been informed of any actual transfer of the bureau to the Interior Department. In the office of Secretary Roper it was said that the transfer is expected to take place soon.

#### PUBLIC WORKS FUNDS ALLOTTED TO SCIENTIFIC BUREAUS

OF the \$64,561,542 of public works funds recently allotted to governmental agencies, \$4,255,592 is distributed to scientific bureaus. Most of the funds will be spent on labor and building material to repair and recondition buildings and laboratories. Some of the allotments are:

*Agriculture Department:* Bureau of Animal Industry, \$549,240 for preserving, repairing, renovating and improving equipment. Bureau of Chemistry and Soils, \$33,919 to repair and preserve and equip its various laboratories. Bureau of Dairy Industry, \$173,677 for repair work, improvements and installations. Bureau of Entomology, \$15,150 for work to prevent loss to agriculture through insects. Experimental Stations, \$4,950, for physical repair and improvements for stations in Hawaii and Puerto Rico.