SOCIETY FOR THE PROMOTION OF ENGINEERING EDUCATION

This was the fortieth anniversary meeting of the Society for the Promotion of Engineering Education. Numerous conferences were held on a wide range of subjects including: The teaching of English, drawing and mechanics; coordinated engineering courses; cooperative engineering education, a subject particularly difficult on account of disturbed economic conditions; and industrial engineering. Various problems relating to the different engineering courses and to advanced education were discussed.

The presidential address of R. A. Seaton was on "The Future of Engineering Schools on the Economic Life of the Country."

At the annual dinner, Dexter S. Kimball spoke on "The Personalities of Engineering Educators." He stressed personality as of more importance than the subjects taught. A great teacher is one who has a scholarship, power of expression, and particularly the power to illustrate, power to inspire, fairness to student, humor, appearance and character. One of the finest things that can come to any man is to be taken into one of the great university communities. It ought to be difficult for him to get in and just as difficult to get out.

The Lamme Medal was awarded to Dexter S. Kimball. This is given each year to the chosen technical teacher for accomplishment in technical teaching or actual advancement of the art of technical training.

President-elect W. E. Wickenden, in expressing appreciation of the honor conferred on him, mentioned the esteem in which the organization is held and the widening circle of recognition of its active service, not only to the field of engineering education, but to the entire field of higher education. Engineering education no longer needs defense, and it should be commended to our associates.

SCIENTIFIC EVENTS

BOTANY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

ACCORDING to the London *Times*, the increasing numbers of students of botany has made necessary the extension of the buildings of the department of botany of the University of Oxford, which flank Inigo Jones's gateway to the Botanic Gardens opposite Magdalen. The alterations, undertaken with a special university grant of £2,000, were completed by the beginning of the term.

Botanical studies at Oxford are taking on a greater importance with the growth of exploration and research in Africa and in other regions. There are now twenty candidates in the final school of botany. In addition to these the department receives a much greater number of elementary students, for whom the study of botany forms only a part of their work. Their number has grown since the recent establishment of the Honor School of Geography, whose students are required to take an elementary course in botany.

On the other hand, the supply of students from the department of rural economy has ceased, for since the reduction of the government grant in the interests of economy, C. S. Orwin and his lieutenants in Parks Road have had to suspend for a time the teaching—though not the research—side of the department's work. Despite the stoppage of the supply from this source, the botany department last term had the record total of 130 students on its books, including post-graduate research workers. Of the latter, one is a professor of botany recently expelled from Germany because of his Jewish blood.

The main feature of the extension is the addition of an upper story to the west wing of the building. This is for the use of students of mycology, the study of fungi and plant diseases and includes a sterilizing room, a room for demonstrations and a small chamber for inoculation. Above these rooms a flat roof has been constructed for students doing physiological experiments which require an absence of shade.

The new work has been carried out entirely on the existing building and does not encroach at any point on the 300-year-old Physic Garden, the oldest of its kind in England, which, with its symmetrical paths and flower-beds, statues and fountains, remains Oxford's only example of the ideal garden of Stuart times.

SCHOOL FOREST FOR THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

TWENTY-SIX hundred acres of forest land in El Dorado County have been given to the University of California as a school forest for the division of forestry in the College of Agriculture by the Michigan-California Lumber Company. The property will be operated for the benefit of the lumber industry.

The president of the Michigan-California Lumber Company, John W. Blodgett, of Grand Rapids, Michigan, in presenting the gift to the university, said: "We desire to offer to the University of California the title to about 2,600 acres of our land to be managed under forestry principles by the division of forestry of the university."

The University of California offers complete training in professional forestry. At the present time there are approximately 125 undergraduate students

and a group of graduate students. Heretofore, the division has lacked a forest of its own, such as those possessed by other forestry schools.

The tract now acquired is near Placerville on the Georgetown Divide, not far from Coloma, where John Marshall discovered gold in California. Two county roads run through the property and it is well situated, both as regards accessibility and ground conditions for future logging operations. Most of the tract is well covered with excellent second-growth which the company has been protecting for many years. The first-class soil and climate give growing conditions of the best.

Three fire lookout stations of the United States Forest Service are close to the tract; one of them overlooks the entire area. The fire hazard is at a minimum, according to Professor Walter Mulford, head of the division, and the State Division of Forestry has agreed to provide fire protection for the tract without expense to the university. As the land is within the boundaries of the El Dorado National Forest, the actual work of protection will be done by the El Dorado National Forest, and the State Division of Forestry will pay the Federal Forest Service for this protection.

With one exception, this is the largest school forest to be owned by any educational institution in the United States; Yale alone has a larger one, in Connecticut. The Harvard forest is of 2,100 acres, that of Cornell 1,800 acres, New York State College of Forestry 2,200 acres, University of Washington 2,000 acres.

CONFERENCE ON QUANTITATIVE BIOLOGY AT COLD SPRING HARBOR

As reported in SCIENCE, June 2, plans were made to hold symposia at the Cold Spring Harbor Biological Laboratory this summer. These summer conferences, as inaugurated there, are an experiment in scientific procedure. Participants have found the symposia of this, the first summer, to have been of such value as to indicate that this procedure can contribute to advance in biology. The essential characteristics are as follows: A small group of investigators, actively working upon a given aspect of modern research, representing mathematics, physics and chemistry as well as biology, are brought together at the laboratory for work and conference of at least a month's duration; symposia are given from time to time, in which those in residence, and others invited for the purpose, take part. Much importance is placed upon the extent and type of discussion following the formal presentation of papers, and everything is arranged with a view to fostering valuable discussion: speakers are requested to emphasize theoretical and controversial aspects, ample time is given for discussion, the number of persons attending the symposia is kept small, and only those actively interested in the subject are invited. Problems are discussed from the point of view of men working in the basic sciences as well as from that of those working in biology. The comparatively long duration of the conference-symposia is of great value for many reasons, of which one example follows. Opportunity for revision is afforded between the presentation of the formal papers and their collection for publication. The discussions are taken down stenographically, and are subsequently rewritten by the author of the paper, in consultation with the active participants in the discussion. The revised discussion is resubmitted to the resident group for final consideration. The paper and discussion, as finally published, consequently represent the best considered thought of the group on the subject.

Having seen the method in operation this summer, it is believed that it admirably helps to meet an important need in biology. Modern quantitative biology is so young, and biology in general has become so specialized, that it is very desirable that productive men should have adequate opportunity to expose their work and ideas to the appreciative criticism of the relatively few men in the country who really know what a given investigator is doing and why he is doing it. Furthermore, the basic sciences are not of as great value to biology as they should be, partly because few investigators in mathematics, physics and chemistry sufficiently acquainted with biological problems are actively interested in conducting experiments, or in formulating theories in terms which would be of immediate significance primarily to biologists. It is hoped that eventually, by means of the method, a closer relationship between biology and the basic sciences, and a body of physicists and chemists actively interested in biological problems, will be built up.

The immediate value of conference-symposia, as conducted at Cold Spring Harbor, is obviously greatest to those taking part. At the same time, since large attendance would interfere with the unique advantages of these symposia, arrangements have been made to make the papers and discussions available, with the least possible delay, to biologists at large. As a first step in accomplishing this, *The Collecting Net,* published at Woods Hole, is printing papers and edited discussions as they become available. Over half the papers and discussions have already appeared. In addition to this partial publication in *The Collecting Net,* all the lectures and discussions are to be gathered into Volume I of the Cold Spring Harbor Symposia in Quantitative Biology. Volume I is concerned chiefly with electrokinetic, bioelectric,