The society voted to hold its next meeting in conjunction with the meeting of the Southern Medical Association in San Antonio, Texas, in November, 1934.

AWARD OF THE TOWNSEND HARRIS MEDALS OF THE COLLEGE OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK

FOR the first time since its organization in 1853, the Associate Alumni of the College of the City of New York honored distinguished alumni for their achievements and for service to the college at the fifty-third annual dinner held in November. Five men received the Townsend Harris Medals, awarded for outstanding post-graduate attainments in their respective fields of endeavor.

According to a press report sent out by the college, the Alumni Service Award, a medal also lately established, was granted to 31 men who had advanced the welfare of the college through significant alumni activity. The awards are made possible through a contribution of the class of 1906 two years ago. Both medals are the work of Albert P. D'Andrea, '18, of the department of art.

The first recipients of the Townsend Harris Medals have gained distinction in the fields of medicine, engineering, religion, architecture and politics. They are Dr. William H. Park, '83, director of the Bureau of Laboratories of the New York Department of Health; Gano Dunn, '89, electrical engineer; the Rev. Dr. Joseph Herman Hertz, '91, chief rabbi of England; John Russell Pope, '93, leading architect, and United States Senator Robert F. Wagner, '98.

More than 600 alumni and guests attended. The principal speaker was Colonel Hugh L. Cooper, the engineer, who described the engineering projects he has recently supervised in Russia. The other speakers were Dr. Lewis Freeman Mott, '83, who represented the fifty-year class; Joseph Dannenberg, '08, who spoke for the twenty-five-year class, and President Frederick B. Robinson, '04, who reviewed for the alumni recent intramural developments. Dr. Walter Timme, '93, president of the Associate Alumni, was toastmaster.

Dr. Park, who will be seventy years old on December 30 of this year, recently occasioned public opposition to his proposed retirement from the Board of Health of New York City because of his remarkable experimental work. Mayor O'Brien supported the plan to continue him in office. After receiving his A.B. degree at the College of the City of New York in 1883, Dr. Park studied at the College of Physicians and Surgeons and at the University of Vienna. In 1894 he became director of the New York Health Department Bureau of Laboratories, and has held that post with distinction since then. For thirty-six years he has been professor of bacteriology and hygiene at the Bellevue Hospital Medical School. He serves the state and nation as a consulting bacteriologist in their respective health divisions. He is president of the American Public Health Association.

Gano Dunn has gained distinction for his work in the field of electrical engineering. Even before his graduation from City College in 1889 he worked for three years with the Western Union Telegraph Company. Two years after he joined the J. G. White Construction Company, he became president, a position he holds to this day. Mr. Dunn has been president of the New York Electrical Society, the American Institute of Electrical Engineers, the Engineering Foundation, and has served as chairman of the National Research Council and the John Fritz Medal Board of Award.

SCIENTIFIC NOTES AND NEWS

DR. FRANK R. LILLIE, since 1931 dean of the Division of Biological Sciences of the University of Chicago, has been appointed Andrew MacLeish distinguished service professor in "recognition of his brilliant and fruitful service to the university." There are six endowed professorships for distinguished service in the university.

THE first award of the gold medal of the Royal Agricultural Society of England in recognition of distinguished service for agriculture has been made to Sir Thomas Middleton, vice-chairman of the Development Commission. In commenting on this award, *Nature* writes: "Much of the success of the present system of agricultural education and research is due to him. He was one of the earliest members of the Agricultural Education Association, and was the first president of the newly constituted Section M, Agriculture, of the British Association at the Dundee meeting in 1912."

ACCORDING to the *Journal* of the American Medical Association, the Medical Association of South Africa has awarded its gold medal for "meritorious services rendered to the profession" to Dr. A. J. Orenstein, director of sanitation of the Rand mines who for six years held office as president of the association and was largely responsible for the amalgamation of the two medical associations in South Africa. Dr. Orenstein is lecturer on tropical medicine at the University of the Witwatersrand.

THE degree of doctor of science has been conferred by the University of London on Sir Thomas Barlow,

professor of clinical medicine at the University of London, and on Sir Flinders Petrie, professor of Egyptology.

DR. L. C. GRATON, professor of mining geology at Harvard University, has been elected a corresponding member of the council of the Chemical, Metallurgical and Mining Society of South Africa.

DR. FRANK T. SHUTT has retired as dominion chemist and assistant director of the Experimental Farms of the Canadian Department of Agriculture after serving for more than forty-five years. On the occasion of his retirement, Dr. Shutt was the recipient of gifts from the Division of Chemistry, over which he had presided for so many years, and from the general staff of the Central Experimental Farm, Ottawa. In the presence of the technical staff of the farm an oak tree was planted on the main lawn by Dr. Shutt to commemorate his many years of service.

DR. WILLIAM HORNADAY, from 1896 to 1926 director of the New York Zoological Park, celebrated his seventy-ninth birthday on December 1.

C. M. JANSKY, JR., of Wisconsin, has been elected president of the American Institute of Radio Engineers for 1934.

AT the annual general meeting of the Cambridge Philosophical Society, the following officers were elected: *President,* Professor J. Barcroft; *Vice-presidents,* Dr. F. H. A. Marshall, Dr. F. W. Aston, Professor E. K. Rideal; *Treasurer,* F. A. Potts; *Secretaries,* F. P. White, Dr. J. D. Cockcroft, Dr. H. Hamshaw Thomas; *New Members of the Council,* F. T. Brooks, Professor J. E. Lennard-Jones, H. L. H. H. Green, Dr. O. M. B. Bulman, P. I. Dee.

THE appointment of Frederick D. Richey, now in charge of corn investigations, Bureau of Plant Industry, as associate chief of that bureau, effective on January 1, has been announced by Secretary of Agriculture Henry A. Wallace. Mr. Richey will aid Chief Knowles A. Ryerson, whose appointment was recently announced, in the general administration of the bureau, and will give special attention to research activities. Mr. Richey succeeds Dr. Karl F. Kellerman, who will become head of a new Division of Plant Disease Eradication and Control in the Bureau of Entomology. This division will have transferred to it all activities directed toward the control and eradication of the phony peach disease, blister rust, barberry, citrus canker and Dutch elm disease.

RICHARD W. SMITH, assistant state geologist of Georgia for seven years, has been appointed acting state geologist to fill the place of Samuel W. McCallie, who died on October 26.

DR. H. L. WALSTER, of the North Dakota Agricultural College, was recently made director of the North Dakota Agricultural Experiment Station. Mr. Walster will serve as dean of the College of Agriculture as well as director of the Experiment Station.

E. W. NELSON, of Ogden, Utah, has been appointed associate professor of forestry at the State University of Utah, to fill the vacancy in grazing management caused by the absence of Dean T. C. Spaulding, who has been granted a year's leave of absence to serve as director of federal relief in Montana.

DR. B. F. BARNES has been appointed head of the department of biology of the Chelsea Polytechnic Institute, which will become vacant on January 1 owing to the retirement of H. B. Lacey. For the past nine years Dr. Barnes has been the senior lecturer in the department of botany at Birkbeck College, University of London.

DR. D. H. INGALL, since 1931 assistant director and research manager of the British Non-Ferrous Metals Research Association, has been appointed principal of the Borough Polytechnic, London, in succession to J. W. Bispham, who has been promoted to be assistant education officer in technology under the London County Council.

N. P. ROBIE, formerly with the Bureau of Standards, Washington, D. C., has become a member of the research department of the Carborundum Company, Niagara Falls, N. Y.

THE Warner & Swasey Company, Cleveland, announces the association with the firm of C. A. Robert Lundin, formerly of Watertown, Mass. He is the son of the late Carl A. R. Lundin, who was for many years superintendent of the works of Alvan Clark and Sons, Cambridge, Mass.

DR. H. W. GILLETT, director of Battelle Memorial Institute, Columbus, Ohio, has announced the establishment at the institute of a research project sponsored by the Elgin National Watch Company, for the study of the metallurgy of watch-making. James L. Gregg and A. W. MacLaren, metallurgists, and Dr. H. W. Russell, chief physicist, have been designated to carry out the work.

PROFESSOR H. L. BOWMAN, in charge of the department of civil engineering at the Drexel Institute, Philadelphia, has been appointed chairman of a committee of the Philadelphia Section of the American Society of Civil Engineers which is to propose a schedule of salaries for engineers in this area who are connected with the construction industry. This action is taken in anticipation of the approval of a code for the Professional Engineer Division of the Construction Industry. Under the code a salary schedule, developed through negotiations between employer and employee groups, must be submitted within four months.

SHERMAN E. JOHNSON, head of the department of agricultural economics of the South Dakota State College, has been granted leave of absence to assist at the Brookings Institution at Washington, D. C., during the ensuing year.

DR. H. K. HAYES, chief of the division of agronomy and plant genetics at the Minnesota Experiment Station, returned recently from a year spent at the New York State College of Agriculture, where he served as acting professor of plant breeding.

DR. A. C. REED, director of the Pacific Institute of Tropical Medicine, lectured before the department of medical zoology of the Johns Hopkins School of Hygiene on November 27 on "Chemotherapy of Amoebiasis."

DR. VILHJALMUR STEFANSSON opened a winter series of lectures at the Explorers Club, New York City, on November 24. He spoke on "Transpolar Commerce by Air" and showed lantern slides made while he was in the Arctic.

DR. E. W. GUDGER, of the department of ichthyology of the American Museum of Natural History, New York City, spoke on November 24 before the New York Aquarium Society on "What the Aquarist Can Do for Ichthyology."

DR. HERBERT LEVINSTEIN will deliver the fifth S. M. Gluckstein memorial lecture before the British Institute of Chemistry on December 15 on "The Chemist as a Directing Force in Industry."

THE annual meeting of the Northwest Scientific Association will be held at the Davenport Hotel in Spokane on December 27 and 28. Besides three general meetings, section programs will be held in botany-zoology, chemistry-physics, education, engineering, forestry, geology-geography, medicine and social science.

SIR FREDERICK GOWLAND HOPKINS, president of the Royal Society, presided at the twenty-first anniversary dinner of the Biochemical Society which was recently held in London. The guests of honor were Professor R. H. A. Plimmer, who was secretary and treasurer from 1911 to 1913; J. A. Gardner, treasurer since 1913, and who, with Professor Plimmer, was responsible for convening the first meeting of the Biochemical Club in 1911, out of which the Biochemical Society was formed in October, 1912, and Professor A. Harden, editor of the *Biochemical Journal* since it was taken over by the Biochemical Society in 1913. The chairman, in proposing the toast of the Biochemical Society, said that of the original members of the society 73 were still members and 23 were present at that dinner. The total membership is now 825.

DR. FREDERICK L. HOFFMAN, in behalf of the Prudential Insurance Company and himself, has entered into an agreement with the Cancer Research Laboratory of the University of Pennsylvania to transfer to that institute as an unconditional gift his entire collection of cancer material and collateral medical and vital statistics for permanent preservation and more convenient access to cancer research workers. The collection includes data and statistics collected in connection with Dr. Hoffman's work on cancer research during the last fifteen years. Dr. Hoffman has also in preparation an extended report on cancer in relation to diet and nutrition. This report has been made possible through the generosity of Mr. Samuel S. Fels, president of the Fels Naphtha Soap Company, Philadelphia. Dr. Hoffman intends to remove to Philadelphia in the near future in order to be in close touch with the Cancer Laboratory, where his office will be located.

The Experiment Station Record reports that at the Michigan College and Station, following action by the legislature reducing state appropriations to $1,000;000 per annum for the current biennium, or 28 per cent. less than for the previous biennium, reductions of $500,000 have been made by the State Board of Agriculture. These included further salary cuts of 4 to 18 per cent. on salaries over $1,000 and a reduction of 22.1 per cent. in maintenance expense. At the New Jersey Stations, following recent drastic reductions in the state appropriations, a supplemental appropriation of $83,000 was granted to the university, a part of which will be allocated to the College of Agriculture.

THE *Journal* of the American Medical Association reports that ten million dollars will be expended in the federal program of malaria control to be launched by the U. S. Public Health Service. The work will be carried on in twelve states: Florida, Arkansas, Alabama, Louisiana, the southeastern portion of Missouri, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Tennessee, Texas and Virginia. Dr. Thomas H. D. Griffitts, who has been conducting a preliminary survey in Florida for the past year, will supervise the campaign, which is planned to begin in the counties of western Florida. The plan, approved by the Federal Emergency Relief Administration, provides that, while the public health service will cooperate in technical direction and will detail medical and engineering officers for duty in the states, each state department of health is ultimately to assume direction of the work. Surveys conducted by Dr. Griffitts in eight of the most heavily infected counties in Florida reveal that more than 5 per cent. of the 10,000 school children examined have shown malarial infection, this number not including those who were actually suffering from acute attacks of malarial fever.

THE report of the Executive Committee presented on October 28 to the Council of the Association of

Scientific Workers, according to *Nature,* is a document containing a record of sustained and useful work. The outstanding event of the last half-year has been the formation in conjunction with the British Science Guild of the Parliamentary Science Committee. The association has also taken an active part with other scientific bodies in the endeavor to save the Research Association of British Rubber Manufacturers from disintegration. To that endeavor has been added an inquiry as to the best means of stabilizing the finances of the industrial research associations generally. In this connection, the association has joined with the British Science Guild in the appointment of a joint committee; and when the labors of that body are completed it is probable that it will report to the Parliamentary Science Committee with a view to taking action. During the period under review, the University Degrees Bill, promoted by the association, has received its second reading in the House of Lords without division; but it is not likely to reach the Statute Book before the session closes. A publication of which the association may well be proud, it is pointed out, is "Science in Parliament," a summary of all affairs relating to science dealt with in Parliament. Another achievement has been the establishment of a publicity bureau.

DISCUSSION

WIDE-SPREAD ERRORS RELATING TO LAPLACE

P. S. LAPLACE (1749–1827) is one of the most widely and most favorably known names in the literature of the exact sciences, especially in astronomy and mathematics. Hence one might have expected that it would be easy to find accurate biographical sketches of him in the histories of these subjects as well as in the general encyclopedias. On the contrary, these sketches usually contain much that is certainly incorrect as well as various statements that can now be neither verified nor disproved in view of the fact that many of the documents relating to him were destroyed by fire. Karl Pearson and G. A. Simon described these conditions in details in volume 21 (1929), *Biometrika,* where the former used the following striking sentence: "At least, our friends, the little historians, might have taken the trouble to inquire whether there was a 'military school' in Beaumont-en-Auge before the year 1771 when Laplace left home for Paris, they might have ascertained the position of Laplace's father, and taken the pains to find out whether Poisson's statement that Laplace was educated at the University of Caen was or was not correct."

It seems now well established that the common statement that P. S. Laplace was born in poverty is fictitious and hence there is no foundation for the assertion that our ignorance of his early life is due to a false shame on his part of springing from humble parentage. He seems to have enjoyed good educational advantages from early childhood and to have been related both on the side of his mother and on the side of his father to prominent members of the community in which they lived. It is, however, less important to dispel false statements relating to the supposed lack of his early cultural advantages than to dispel the unfounded derogatory statements relating to his character. He achieved not only great scientific distinction but also eminent political positions. In particular, Napoleon appointed him as Minister of the Interior, but replaced him six weeks later by his own brother, Lucien Buonaparte. In his *Mémoires de Sainte Hélène* Napoleon described this incident as follows: "Mathematician of the highest rank, Laplace was not long in showing himself an extremely poor administrator. From his first actions I realized that I had deceived myself. He sought everywhere for subtleties, had only problematic ideas, and carried the spirit of the 'infinitely small' into administration."

This quotation proves only that Laplace was not the kind of administrator that Napoleon wanted in that position at that time. The fact that his own government was overthrown later shows that he himself was not always the kind of administrator that the people of France wanted. Since politics is not an exact science the ideas relating thereto are necessarily problematic. The fact that France has continued to the present time to put eminent mathematicians into high administrative positions implies that she has not lost sight of the fact that high mathematical attainments do not necessarily imply a lack of administrative ability. The fact that Laplace was greatly honored by successive governments with different policies does not imply, as some historians assert, that he sought political favors at the expense of following his convictions as regards political questions. In a country where high scientific attainments are widely appreciated the governments naturally seek the support of those who have such attainments.

P. S. Laplace seldom, if ever, expressed in his writings any political opinions of his own, but in his widely read "History of Mathematics" W. R. Ball said that "the skill and rapidity with which he man-