

SOCIETIES AND MEETINGS

FORMATION OF AN ACADEMY OF MEDICINE IN WASHINGTON, D. C.

ON April 28, 1936, the Academy of Medicine of Washington, D. C., was organized and had its initial meeting. Officers elected were: *President*, Dr. William A. White; *vice-president*, Dr. Carl Voegtlin; *treasurer*, Dr. William C. White; *secretary*, Dr. Errett C. Albritton; *directors*, Drs. Aleš Hrdlička, Sterling Ruffin, Lyman J. Briggs, Earl B. McKinley and Matthew W. Perry. The academy membership is limited to 60 ordinary resident members and 30 associate and non-resident members.

As stated in its constitution, the academy has been organized "for the advancement of the science of medicine and to promote the mutual exchange of knowledge between medical and other scientific groups."

In the formation of medical groups two opposite trends may be noticed, the main one toward a greater differentiation of function, the other toward a reunification of interests. The first is a reflection of the process of cleavage and development, still going on, by which an amazing number of sciences has been derived from the originally undifferentiated profession of the healing of the sick; the other represents an effort to overcome the disadvantage of divergence that accompanies differentiation.

Two large groups in particular have been carried apart in this process, the clinicians and clinical investigators, and the laboratory investigators in medicine. Two others may be named that have little professional contact with these, workers in public health and men in the sciences allied to medicine. In each of these groups professional societies or sections of societies have grown up with ever more precisely limited objectives. Work is so active at every frontier that only an occasional guest speaker from one field can bring word to those in another that permits direct interchange of ideas between them.

The organization of the Academy of Medicine of Washington is one of the infrequent instances of a movement counter to this general trend. It draws its membership from all medical and associated scientific groups, and will serve as a forum for exchange of ideas and discussion of problems of general interest in medical science.

To one who is aware of the remarkable diversity of medical and related fields represented in Washington, an organization of this sort would seem long overdue. In addition to the various clinical fields, those of pharmacology, nutrition, chemistry, medical zoology, immunity and others are represented in the staffs of the National Institute of Health and the Beltsville Research Center; anthropology is represented in the

staff of the National Museum; research in physics and physical chemistry is in progress at the Bureau of Standards; laboratories of the various preclinical medical sciences are found in the medical schools of the city, and in other organizations such fields are represented as army and navy medical administration, public health administration, epidemiology, parasitology, experimental medicine, national medical library administration, medical sociology, entomology, mycology and others.

The situation in Washington is uniquely favorable for the development of a forum in which problems of general interest in medical science may be examined from all angles. In the presence of an opportunity so unusual it is believed that the academy has acted wisely in giving no special emphasis to the medical degree as compared with the doctor's degree in one of the medical or allied sciences, and that in this sense its membership is non-medical as well as medical.

E. C. A.

THE NEW ORLEANS ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

THE New Orleans Academy of Sciences held its eighty-third annual meeting on March 20 and 21, at Tulane University, New Orleans, with a formal registration of 226 and a gross attendance, at all sessions, lectures and demonstrations, of approximately 700. Thirty-eight papers were presented at the technical sessions on Friday afternoon, distributed as follows: Sections A and E (Physics, Engineering, Mathematics, Astronomy, and Geology), 8; Section B (Chemistry), 7; Section C (Biological Sciences), 9; Section D (Medical Sciences), 8; Section F (Social Sciences), 6.

The annual public address, delivered this year by Dr. Otis W. Caldwell, general secretary of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, on "Some Studies Regarding Popular Notions and Modern Science," has already been noted in *SCIENCE* for April 3. Dr. Caldwell also spoke on "The Junior Academy Movement" at the Saturday morning symposium on stimulation of scientific interest at the high-school level. Six local speakers, three of them sponsors of science clubs in New Orleans high schools, also contributed to this symposium.

In connection with the junior academy movement, the department of physics at Tulane University provided a demonstration lecture by Dr. Walter C. Bosch, especially for science students from the public, parochial and private secondary schools. His subject was "The Magic of Modern Science," and the chief features of the demonstration were the astonishing effects, such as visible sounds and audible light, obtainable by appropriate manipulation of the phenomena of ionization. This is the second year such a demonstration