

## SCIENTIFIC EVENTS

### THE EFFECTIVE USE OF SCIENTIFIC ABILITY

A PLAN to make productive unused scientific ability in work directing segments of war research problems in the laboratories of the smaller colleges has been initiated by the American Chemical Society. Dr. Charles L. Parsons, secretary of the society, has announced that the unused talents of directors of research who have retired from the universities and industry will be connected with departments of chemistry in institutions where the staff is not sufficiently large or well equipped to carry on research alone. The plan is under the direction of a committee of the society, of which Dr. J. Sam Guy, chairman of the department of chemistry at Emory University, is chairman. Members of the committee are: Dr. William Lloyd Evans, of the Ohio State University, and Dr. Samuel C. Lind, of the University of Minnesota, both past presidents of the society; Dr. Hobart H. Willard, of the University of Michigan; Dr. E. Emmet Reid, professor emeritus of the Johns Hopkins University; Dr. B. Smith Hopkins, professor emeritus of the University of Illinois, and Dr. Stuart R. Brinkley, of Yale University.

The plan is designed to encourage and foster research in American colleges through the use of advisers; it is believed that many unsolved chemical problems could be undertaken under the direction of the visiting professors who have had wide experience in guiding research. Dr. Guy has made the following statement:

This is no time for any idle "scrap" in chemical research ability to be sitting around. Every man able to direct research in chemistry should be up and at it. Every college teacher, every able college student can do his bit. It is the function of our committee to get these forces together. We must "scrap out" bits of valuable scientific ability and set them to work on new problems.

More chemical research is needed as a means of national defense and for the training of future chemists who will be responsible for "better things for better living through chemistry." Many universities and industries, however, have a definite policy of retiring employees at the age of approximately sixty-five years. These emeritus chemists have a vast store of information and inspiration which should not be lost at a time when the nation requires scientific research almost more than anything else.

There are also active directors of research who are eager to spread their influence beyond their individual laboratories. These men have numbers of problems, all a part of one large scheme of research, which they would be glad to farm out to colleges where some wide-awake student of the upper classes would be interested. The problems are not quite large enough for a doctor's thesis but still offer a challenge to men in their senior year. Many students, who would thrill at the taste of research,

need leadership which their colleges, for one reason or another, have not been able to furnish.

The feasibility of the program has been proved by the experience of Dr. Reid, who since his retirement from the Johns Hopkins University has been aiding research in a group of southern colleges, and of Professor John Howe Yoe, of the University of Virginia, who has been dividing large problems into smaller units capable of being handled with a minimum of apparatus and material. Last year Dr. Reid, in his circuit of nine southern schools, had more men cooperating in his research program than he ever had at any time while he was professor at the Johns Hopkins University.

The committee will act as a clearing house for research directors who are willing to give their time and for colleges interested in the plan. It is thought probable that industrial research laboratories will cooperate in the program.

### CANCELLATION OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON WEIGHTS AND MEASURES

THE annual meeting of the National Conference on Weights and Measures which is usually held in June of each year at Washington, D. C., has been cancelled for 1942 because of unsettled conditions throughout the country and serious congestion in Washington resulting from the war. It is undetermined at present whether future meetings of the conference will be held during the continuance of the war.

The National Conference on Weights and Measures, which is a body made up of state and local weights and measures officials from all parts of the United States, has a number of standing committees dealing with various phases of weights and measures activity. These committees are continuing to function during the period of recess of the national conference, and when matters arise upon which the national conference would ordinarily take action, such matters, if within the scope of one of these committees, are referred for committee consideration. The results of such committee actions are then made public as recommendations of the national conference, the *Weights and Measures News Letter* of the National Bureau of Standards being the medium for informing state and local weights and measures officials of these recommendations. The president of the national conference, Dr. Lyman J. Briggs, director of the National Bureau of Standards, and the secretary, R. W. Smith, assistant chief of the Division of Weights and Measures of the bureau, have been called upon by war agencies in Washington to present the recommendations of the national conference.