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THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE

ANNUAL MEETING AT CLEVELAND, OHIO, SEPTEMBER 11-16, 1944

By DR. F. R. MOULTON

PERMANENT SECRETARY

AFTER cancelling meetings for two years on request of the Office of Defense Transportation because of transportation difficulties, the association will hold its annual meeting for 1944 in Cleveland, Ohio, from September 11 to September 16, inclusive. All affiliated and associated societies have been invited to participate in the meeting so far as it may be possible for them to do so. If transportation conditions are favorable, the meeting will be well attended; if there are serious traffic congestions in September, it will be streamlined to the extent that may be necessary.

September was chosen as the time for the meeting, first, because the holiday seasons must be avoided, and, second, because for at least some colleges and universities this is an open period between sessions. In par-

ticular, it is the week at Case School of Applied Science between the departure of one group of trainees and the arrival of another group, and it is the week between the summer and autumn sessions at Western Reserve University. Since Case School of Applied Science will provide several meeting rooms and Western Reserve University a large number, this consideration is very important. After the close of the war annual meetings of the association will be held again at the Christmas holiday season or perhaps at some other time that may be more advantageous. Such questions will be open for consideration after the Cleveland meeting.

Cleveland was chosen for the place of meeting because it is about the only city in the country that now

can provide 40 to 50 rooms for simultaneous sessions and accommodations for a large convention. Dr. William E. Wickenden, president of Case School of Applied Science, will be chairman of the General Committee for the meeting: Western Reserve University will make its facilities available to the association and its affiliated societies. The Scientific Exhibition and the general registration will be in the arena of the Cleveland Auditorium.

Two conferences of the secretaries of the sections and affiliated societies were held for the purpose of discussing general policies to be followed in organizing programs for meetings of the association and its affiliated societies. Secretaries of sections and of affiliated societies who live in the Middle West met in Chicago on February 13; those living in the East met in New York on February 20. The following named secretaries and officers of the association attended the Chicago conference:

W. A. Albrecht (University of Missouri), secretary of the section on agriculture.

C. C. Allison (The Ohio State University), secretary of the American Phytopathological Society.

A. J. Carlson (The University of Chicago), president of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

L. V. Domm (The University of Chicago), secretary of the American Society of Zoologists.

William A. Dreyer (University of Cincinnati), secretary of the Ecological Society of America.

Neil E. Gordon (Wayne University), secretary of the section on chemistry.

Glenn L. Jenkins (Purdue University), chairman of the subsection on pharmacy.

A. C. Kinsey (Indiana University), secretary of the American Society of Naturalists.

Paul C. Kitchin (The Ohio State University), secretary of the subsection on dentistry.

W. M. Krogman (The University of Chicago), secretary of the section on anthropology.

D. H. Leavens (The University of Chicago), representative of the Econometric Society.

George W. Martin (State University of Iowa), secretary of the section on botanical sciences.

C. E. Mickel (University of Minnesota), president of the Entomological Society of America.

F. R. Moulton (Smithsonian Institution Building, Washington), permanent secretary of the association.

Orlando Park (Northwestern University), president of the Ecological Society of America.

H. H. Remmers (Purdue University), secretary of the section on education.

H. H. Ross (University of Illinois), secretary of the Entomological Society of America.

L. H. Snyder (The Ohio State University), secretary of the Genetics Society of America.

E. C. Stakman (University of Minnesota), member of the Executive Committee.

L. H. Tiffany (Northwestern University), representative of the Limnological Society of America.

Sam Woodley (Smithsonian Institution Building, Washington), assistant secretary of the association.

C. C. Wylie (State University of Iowa), secretary of the section on astronomy.

The following named secretaries and officers of the association attended the New York conference:

Paul R. Burkholder (Yale University), secretary of the Botanical Society of America.

O. W. Caldwell (Boyce Thompson Institute for Plant Research), general secretary of the association.

A. J. Carlson (The University of Chicago), president of the association.

Frank D. Carvin (Newark College of Engineering), secretary of the section on engineering.

E. N. Cory (University of Maryland), secretary of the American Association of Economic Entomologists.

J. T. Culbertson (Columbia University), secretary of the American Society of Parasitologists.

L. K. Frank (New York Academy of Medicine), guest.

E. P. Hutchinson (U. S. Department of Justice, Philadelphia), secretary of the section on social and economic sciences.

E. S. Johnston (Smithsonian Institution Building, Washington), secretary of the American Society of Plant Physiologists.

J. R. Kline (University of Pennsylvania), secretary of the American Mathematical Society.

Burton E. Livingston (Riderwood, Maryland), chairman of the Executive Committee.

F. R. Moulton (Smithsonian Institution Building, Washington), permanent secretary of the association.

Gardner Murphy (College of the City of New York), guest.

R. J. Seeger (U. S. Navy Department, Washington), secretary of the section on historical and philological sciences.

G. A. Stetson (Engineering Societies Building, New York City), editor of the American Society of Mechanical Engineers.

A. C. Swinnerton (Signal Corps, U. S. War Department), secretary of the section on geology and geography.

H. B. Tukey (New York State College Experiment Station, Geneva), secretary of the American Society for Horticultural Science.

Sam Woodley (Smithsonian Institution Building), assistant secretary of the association.

These conferences were not concerned primarily with the numerous administrative details that must be given attention in preparation for a great meeting of many sections and societies. Instead, they were almost entirely devoted to such fundamental questions as the relations and obligations of science to the future of civilization, the purposes of scientific meetings, the interrelations among various sciences and between the natural and the social sciences, the value both of re-

ports of special researches and of syntheses of broad fields of science, and the importance of placing the methods and spirit of science, as well as its results, before the general public. Such discussions lead first to attitudes of mind rather than to specific actions, yet a few resolutions were passed by both conferences. The principal one passed by the Chicago conference was the following:

Resolved, that this conference recommend that the fundamental nature of science, its relations and obligations to society, together with the means of securing public comprehension of the scientific method and attitudes, be considered as subjects to be stressed in the September meeting, both in general sessions and in symposia and, as may seem desirable, in the meetings of the individual sections and societies.

This resolution was approved at the New York conference. As a first step toward putting it into effect, the secretaries of three affiliated societies, Dr. Paul R. Burkholder, secretary of the Botanical Society of America, Dr. Earl S. Johnston, secretary of the American Society of Plant Physiologists, and Dr. H. B. Tukey, secretary of the American Society for Horticultural Science, at the close of the meeting promptly went into a huddle to consider what joint programs their societies might advantageously organize. Evidently it will require much cooperative work and experimentation to increase the number and improve the quality of programs of the type that was proposed. In recognition of this fact the Chicago conference passed a supplementary resolution to the effect that the "sections and societies continually study ways and means of more effective organization and presentation of their programs at annual meetings."

In the course of the discussions it was suggested that it might be advantageous for more of the larger societies to hold regional meetings for the presentation of short reports on current research, and to reserve for the annual meetings the presentation of mature work and extensive symposia. As a matter of fact, a number of societies, such as the American Mathematical Society, have long held what are in effect regional meetings. But in this complex world in which the sciences are more and more interrelated, it would be in the long run a serious error for specialists in any field to isolate themselves from specialists in other fields. Cross-fertilization in science is as important as in biology and inbreeding is as likely to lead to sterility.

Another question that will be considered in this transition period is the date of the annual meeting of the association and its affiliated and associated socie-

ties. The Christmas holiday period has advantages which are well known, and also serious disadvantages. A meeting of several days at that season of the year is almost certain to conflict with family parties and reunions. Another serious matter is that Christmas varies from year to year throughout the entire week. Furthermore, the Christmas season is always a period of heavy railroad travel and the weather is often unfavorable. Perhaps in the future the latter part of November or early December would be more satisfactory. Of course, there is always the problem for university men of interrupting their lectures. But this disadvantage might be largely relieved by starting the meetings on Thursday or Friday and continuing until the following Tuesday or Wednesday. The British Association for the Advancement of Science usually times its meetings in this way, and with conspicuous success. Since few university lectures are scheduled for Saturdays and not all are given on Mondays, a meeting continuing over the week-end would not seriously disrupt university schedules. There would be advantages, too, for scientists in government bureaus and industrial laboratories.

However, attention must now be centered on the Cleveland meeting in September. Some inconveniences must be expected but, with our entire economic order disrupted by the war, scientists will be as inventive in overcoming difficulties as are farmers and manufacturers. The problem of "reconversion" for most scientists will be relatively simple.

The New York conference listed a number of subjects suitable for programs at the Cleveland meeting, such as "science and the post-war world, with particular emphasis upon rehabilitation, education and research; science and world peace; a national policy for science; agencies which support science; science and government; science and civilization; science and research; science and education; science and rehabilitation; can science exist half free and half controlled?"

Evidently not all these important problems can be discussed at one meeting, but such questions should be considered at meetings of the association because scientists are members of society and strongly influence our social order. Such subjects should be examined because reflection on them will broaden the vision of scientists and aid them to guide the development of science more wisely. They should be considered in open forums in order to place before the general public the high purposes of science, something of its methods, and its supreme importance for the advancement of civilization. This last reason for such discussions is not the least, for ultimately the progress of science will rest upon society as a whole.