very real loss. Professor Pricer had for years maintained an intimate and influential relationship to the problems involved in the teaching of the natural sciences in the secondary schools. His wholesome and extensive personal contact with science teachers and his untiring labor in the work of various educational organizations had brought him into prominence as one of the leaders in the program of reconstruction of the science curriculum of the secondary schools of the middle west. Unusual thoroughness of analysis, fairness of judgment, and whole-hearted sincerity had created for him a place in the esteem of his coworkers in natural science.

As secretary of the Illinois State Academy of Science for a period of four years, his service to that organization has been very marked. In this capacity as well as in his other relations he has done much to bring before the public the needs for more extensive education in science as a foundation for rational living and as an aid to the advancement of public health work.

The reception accorded his work upon the Life History of the Carpenter Ant[2] indicates his ability in original investigation. Teaching duties and a sense of personal obligation to devote his energies to teaching problems marked for him a course that lay chiefly through the educational field though he never lost interest in following the progress of current investigations.

H. J. VAN CLEAVE

SCIENTIFIC EVENTS

THE ERUPTION OF KATLA IN ICELAND

THE volcano of Katla, situated some 50 kilometers southwest of Hekla, was in violent eruption in October, 1918, after remaining quiescent since the last previous eruption in 1860. A note by M. A. Lacroix in the *Comptes Rendus* of the Paris Academy of Sciences, abstracted in the *Geographical Journal,* gives some account of the eruption from data sent to him from Iceland. A little after noon on the 12th a slight earthquake shock was followed by the uprising above the Mýrdalsjökull of an enormous column of incandescent ashes visible throughout the island for 200 to 300 kilometers. At Reykjavik a thick fall of ash darkened the whole sky, and a tidal wave was experienced on the coast south of the volcano. As is usual in Iceland, the paroxysm was accompanied by violent glacier outbursts. The first visitor to the crater after the eruption was M. Pall Sveinsson, whose notes have been placed at M. Lacroix's disposal. Katla lies in the east-southeast of the Mýrdalsjökull, one of the great ice-masses of southern Iceland, and on its southeast side extends the Mýrdalsandur, a great desert of sand formed of the material deposited during the glacial outbursts. In the northwest and southwest the Mýrdalsjökull is surmounted by two domes of ice rising to heights of 1,500 to 1,600 meters. Between them is a cup-shaped depression at the bottom of which the crater of Katla opens. Even the outer slopes of the ice-dome by which M. Sveinsson ascended were covered with ashes to a depth of half a meter, and those falling to the crater with half as much again. The rift of the crater, which measured from 500 to 800 by 40 meters, was free from ice, but water was flowing along it. No fumeroles nor products of sublimation were seen, only a yellowish-brown mud, the lighter portions of which seem derived by alteration from the darker, heavier ash. The glacier torrents had opened two deep ravines towards the south and east, and had done considerable damage, carrying with them huge masses of ice to a distance of 30 kilometers. The stony débris had formed a vast promontory on the coast similar to that formed in 1860. Like the thirteen previously recorded eruptions, that of 1918 was exclusively explosive, with no outpouring of lava—a fact more remarkable from the vicinity of Katla to the scene of the great fissure eruption of 1783. A chemical comparison of the ash of 1918 with the lava of 1783 will be of interest, for it is possible that the exclusive explosive character of the Katla eruptions may be due to the superimposition of the enormous ice-mass of the Mýrdalsjökull. A preliminary

[2] *Biological Bulletin,* Vol. 14 (1908).

analysis of the ash shows it to be rich in titanium, a character common to the few examples yet analyzed of the basaltic volcanic rocks of Iceland, the Færoes, and Greenland.

UTILIZATION OF THE FORESTS OF ALASKA

Colonel W. B. Greeley, the new chief forester of the United States, has returned from a month's inspection of the timber, water power and national resources of Alaska. In an interview in the Seattle *Post-Intelligencer* he is reported to have said:

Alaska has more than 100,000,000 cords of pulp wood. The territory has sufficient timber resources to produce 1,500,000 tons of paper annually. The Alaska Pulp and Paper Company, comprising California interests, is now constructing the first pulp plant at Port Snettisham, in southeastern Alaska. This mill will be supplied with 100,000,000 feet of timber just purchased from the Forest Service and is probably the forerunner of a large pulp and newspaper factory at that point.

In addition to the vast pulp resources of Alaska, Puget Sound offers splendid opportunity for at least six large pulp and paper mills. There are frequent inquiries of the Federal Forest Department for pulp wood concessions in this state. Even at the present time there is enough or would be enough wood of inferior quality cut in logging camps to support a large local paper industry here.

Establishment of such an industry on Puget Sound would be a great accomplishment from the standpoint of practical conservation—it would afford a market for inferior woods now being wasted in logging camps already established. In addition, there are large areas of hemlock and spruce and balsam on the Olympic Peninsula and in the Snoqualmie national forest. The entire forestry industry of the United States is moving westward, and with it is coming the paper industry.

Alaska contains 100,000,000 cords of pulpwood. She has the resources to produce 1,500,000 tons of paper yearly. That is nearly a third of the paper used in the United States, an amount nearly equal to what we are now compelled to import from Canada. With reasonable care, under the methods followed by the Forest Service, this output can be kept up from the national forests of Alaska perpetually. There is a real solution of the paper shortage.

A few years ago we heard much about the inferior character of the forests in Alaska. As a matter of fact, aside from enormous quantities of good pulpwood and serviceable construction timber, the territory probably contains the largest quantity of clear, high-grade spruce to be found in the United States.

During the war this spruce passed every test for airplane construction, and it is now being shipped to the eastern states in increasing quantities for car and factory stock and high-grade finish. One of the things we shall accomplish by bringing the paper industry into Alaska will be to open up her thousands of miles of coastal forests and make available a much larger supply of special products like cedar, clear spruce and long piling.

THE INTERNATIONAL CHEMICAL CONFERENCE

The third session of the International Chemical Conference met at Rome, June 21 to 25, with Professor Charles Moureu, member of the Institute of France, as president. According to the account of the *Journal of Industrial and Engineering Chemistry* the program began with the meeting of the council of the International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry, composed of the representatives of the five nations which founded the Union. The council considered the adhesion to the union of seven new countries: namely, Canada, Denmark, Spain, Greece, the Netherlands, Portugal and Czecho-Slovakia, which were all admitted. The plan of organization and administration of the International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry, which was presented by M. Gerard, was as follows:

To adhere to the union a country must establish a liaison between its chemical groups by the formation of a national council or federation. The initiative of this organization must be taken by a chemical society, the National Academy, the National Research Council or a similar national institution, or by the government.

The union is governed by the council, composed of delegates from each of the supporting countries, whose executive power is vested in a bureau. The general assembly receives reports from the council, approves the accounts of the past session, adopts the budget for the following session, and considers the questions to be included on the program. Under the council and an executive com-