

SCIENTIFIC NOTES AND NEWS

DR. H. H. BENNETT, chief of the Soil Conservation Service, and Dr. Robert V. Allison, of the Florida Experiment Station, will receive from the President of Cuba at the 1944 meeting of the Cuban National Congress of Soil and Fertilizers the Carlos Manuel de Cestenes decoration in recognition of soil studies and investigations made in Cuba from 1924 to 1926.

THE council of the Royal Meteorological Society, London, has awarded the Symons Gold Medal for 1944 to Dr. C. W. B. Normand, director-general of observatories in India. The medal is awarded biennially for distinguished work in connection with meteorological science.

PROFESSOR BASIL F. J. SCHONLAND, F.R.S., director of the Bernard Price Institute of Geophysics and Carnegie-Price professor of geophysics in the University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, has been awarded the South African Medal and Grant for 1943 by the council of the South African Association for the Advancement of Science. At present, Professor Schonland is on service as a brigadier in the Union Defence Force, seconded for specialized scientific work with the military authorities in England.

DR. LLOYD M. PIDGEON, of the National Research Council of Canada, has been awarded the platinum medal of the International Nickel Company by the Canadian Institute of Mining and Metallurgy and the special merit medal of the Professional Institute of the Civil Service of Canada for his development of a process for the production of magnesium. Dr. Pidgeon was recently appointed head of the department of metallurgical engineering of the University of Toronto.

DR. CECIL J. WATSON, head of the department of medicine of the University of Minnesota, has been elected president of the Central Society for Clinical Research.

AT the meeting of the Eastern Pennsylvania Chapter of the Society of American Bacteriologists on November 23 the following officers were elected for the year 1944: *President*, Dr. Earl W. Spaulding, department of bacteriology of the School of Medicine of Temple University; *Secretary-Treasurer and Councilor*, Dr. Harry E. Morton, department of bacteriology of the School of Medicine of the University of Pennsylvania; *Councilor's Alternate*, Dr. Ruth E. Miller, of the department of bacteriology of the Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania.

HAROLD N. BIXLER, personnel director of the Mutual Life Insurance Company of New York, has been elected chairman of the American Society of Safety Engineers.

DR. R. K. STRATFORD, chief chemist of the Imperial Oil Company, has been elected president of the Canadian Institute of Chemistry.

OFFICERS of the Royal Society of Edinburgh have been elected as follows: *President*, Professor E. T. Whittaker; *Vice-Presidents*, Dr. James Watt, Professor T. H. Milroy, Sir John Boyd Orr, Dr. A. W. Greenwood, Professor E. Hindle and Dr. D. Russell; *General Secretary*, Professor James P. Kendall.

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL W. B. R. KING, Yates-Goldsmid professor of geology at University College, London, from 1912 to 1920 a member of the Geological Survey of Great Britain, has been appointed Woodwardian professor of geology at the University of Cambridge.

PROFESSOR H. GORDON JACKSON, who has been head of the department of zoology of Birkbeck College, London, since 1921 and professor since 1928, has been appointed head of the college.

DR. CLIFFORD B. PURVIS has succeeded Professor Harold Hibbert as Eddy professor of industrial and cellulose chemistry at McGill University. Professor Hibbert had reached the retiring age.

G. H. RAWCLIFFE has been appointed to the chair of electrical engineering in the University of Bristol in succession to the late Professor D. Robertson.

DR. GEORGE B. DARLING, president and comptroller of the W. K. Kellogg Foundation, has resigned to become associated with the division of medical science of the National Research Council.

DR. DONALD H. JACOBS, associate physicist at the National Bureau of Standards, has been appointed senior physicist at the U. S. Naval Observatory, Washington, D. C.

H. ARTHUR MEYER, assistant professor of forestry at Pennsylvania State College, has leave of absence to enable him to accept an assignment for cinchona procurement for the Office of Economic Warfare.

RECENT appointments to the staff of the biological division of Food Research Laboratories, Inc., Long Island City, New York, include Dr. Nathan Rakieta, formerly of the Laboratory of Applied Physiology of Yale University and lately first lieutenant, U. S. Army Air Corps, and Dr. Roslyn T. Roth, formerly research microanalyst at New York University and more recently biochemist at the New York Psychiatric Institute, Columbia Medical Center. Dr. Rakieta will supervise the animal laboratories; Dr. Roth will specialize in the statistical aspects of the design and interpretation of bioassays.

SIR GEORGE THOMPSON, professor of physics at the Imperial College of Science and Technology, London, has been appointed scientific adviser to the British Air Ministry.

Nature writes that "scientific men and many others will learn with much pleasure that Professor Niels Bohr, of the Institute of Theoretical Physics, Copenhagen, has succeeded in escaping from Denmark and has reached Great Britain."

DR. WILLIAM McDOWELL HAMMON, assistant professor of epidemiology at the Medical School in San Francisco of the University of California, and Dr. H. G. Johnstone, assistant professor of bacteriology, are studying tropical medicine in Central America through the cooperation of the Office of Inter-American Affairs and of the Surgeon-General of the Army.

Nature reports that Professor A. V. Hill, secretary of the Royal Society, will visit India to advise on problems of scientific and industrial research in relation to reconstruction problems and the coordination of such research in India with that elsewhere. His tour is being undertaken at the invitation of the Government of India and with the consent of the Royal Society.

DR. J. HOWARD MUELLER, professor of bacteriology and immunology at the Harvard Medical School, will deliver on December 16 the third Harvey Society lecture of the current series at the New York Academy of Medicine. He will speak on "Nutrition of the Single Cell; its Applications in Medical Bacteriology."

DR. FRANK B. JEWETT, vice-president of the American Telephone and Telegraph Company, president of the National Academy of Sciences, spoke on December 1 on new scientific and technological developments and their application to postwar economy at an open-forum meeting of the Institute on Postwar Reconstruction of New York University.

DR. GEORGE L. CLARK, professor of chemistry of the University of Illinois, on November 19 addressed the University of Cincinnati Chapter of Sigma Xi on "The Role of the Electron Microscope in Physical, Chemical, Industrial and Biological Research."

DR. F. C. BARTLETT, professor of experimental psychology in the University of Cambridge, gave on November 23 the Huxley lecture of the Royal Anthropological Institute, London. He spoke on "Anthropology in Reconstruction."

THE November and December program of lectures arranged by the Royal Institution, London, include a lecture by Sir Joseph Barcroft, F.R.S., on the preservation of foods by drying, and by Professor H. W. Florey, F.R.S., on the development of penicillin for

medical uses; a course of lectures will be given on the progress in the treatment of infections by Sir Henry Dale, P.R.S., and a course by Professor J. C. Drummond on the food problems of the post-war years.

THE annual meeting of the Society of Automotive Engineers will be held at Detroit from January 10 to 14.

IN response to a request made by the second Conference on X-ray Analysis held in Cambridge last April, the Board of the British Institute of Physics has authorized the formation of an additional group empowered to arrange meetings and conferences and generally to be a medium for the exchange of information on matters relating to x-ray diffraction. The organizing committee of the conference, which was requested to act as the first group committee, has elected Professor Sir Lawrence Bragg as chairman and Dr. H. Lipson as honorary secretary and treasurer.

THE Associated Defense Committees of Chicago Technical Societies have issued an urgent request for the names and addresses of all engineers or scientists who have technical information concerning industries, communications, transportation, raw materials, etc., of any areas in Europe or in the Pacific which are now held by the enemy or might conceivably become theaters of war operations. The committee is also looking for still pictures or moving pictures showing coastlines, harbors, industrial centers, and the like, of such areas. Those having such information or knowing of some one who has such information should communicate at once with Robert C. Brown, Jr., chairman of the Associated Defense Committees, 226 West Jackson Boulevard, Chicago, giving as much detail as possible concerning the type of information that is available.

Chemical and Engineering News reports that the National Department of Health Service of Mexico City has sent fifteen representatives to study for two terms in the School of Public Health at the University of Michigan. Included in the group are four public health nurses, five public health engineers and six veterinarians. Expenses are paid by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation.

THE faculty and administrative officers of the Philadelphia College of Pharmacy and Science have gone on record as being definitely opposed to further acceleration of courses beyond the current war-time plan of conducting the usual four-year course in two years and nine months. Following is a resolution unanimously passed at a meeting of the faculty:

WHEREAS: Any lowering of the standards of pharmaceutical education means the inevitable defeat of the effort

to keep pharmacy in the status of a profession, therefore be it

Resolved: By the Faculty of the Philadelphia College of Pharmacy and Science, that we deprecate any movement to shorten the time devoted to the course of pharmaceutical education in the college, and be it further

Resolved: That we request the Board of Trustees of the college to return, as soon as practicable, to the previous requirement of four calendar years of study as a requisite for the degree of bachelor of science in pharmacy, and be it further

Resolved: That a copy of these resolutions be properly publicized to the end that it may be realized that the Philadelphia College stands to-day, as it has in the past, for sound educational principles.

THE board of trustees and the dean of the Texas Dental College at Houston announced recently that the program of dental education conducted by the college would be discontinued on August 31 and that the properties of the college would be given to the University of Texas. The school of dentistry was opened on September 1 in the properties acquired by gift from the Texas Dental College, which was founded in Houston in February, 1905. It was organized as a public trust in 1929. Dr. F. C. Elliott has been dean of the college since 1932 and has been named dean of the School of Dentistry of the University of Texas. The Chamber of Commerce of Houston gave a testimonial dinner for Dr. Elliott on June 3 at which he was highly praised for his part in the transfer of the college to the university and for his many public services to the city of Houston and to the State of Texas in the promotion of public health.

AFTER establishing life trust funds of \$200,000, the will of the late former Governor Horace White provides that three fourths of the residuary estate shall go to Cornell University at Ithaca and one fourth to Syracuse University. Income from the fund at Cornell University will be applied in whole or in part "to pay or increase salaries of officers and members of the faculty who have rendered distinguished services or who may be of great value to the university." Syracuse University's share in the estate will be known as "the Horace White Fund" and the income will be used

to pay the salary of "the Edward C. Reifenshtein professorship of medicine." The \$200,000 set up for life trusts ultimately will revert to the two universities in their proportionate shares.

It is announced by the Mining Association of Great Britain that the colliery owners of Great Britain will provide further sums, of the order of half a million pounds, for coal research, in order to extend their existing program, which itself involves the expenditure of £1,000,000 over the current five years. The new program relates to the development of processes for producing hydro-carbons and hydro-carbon derivatives from coal and to the treatment of coal generally as a chemical raw material. The program will begin immediately, and the colliery owners will themselves contribute between £400,000 and £500,000 towards its cost during the period ending with 1945.

ACCORDING to *Nature*, a million dollars has been set aside by the British Council for the Promotion of Science and Technology in China as cash awards for solutions of national defense scientific problems. The Council for the Promotion of Science and Technology has selected ten special industrial and scientific problems for consideration. Chinese men of science, industrial technicians and research workers are invited to engage in studies and research on these problems and submit reports of their results to the council before the end of the current year.

THE South African Standards Institution, which is the national standardizing body in the Union and incorporates the South African branch of the British Standards Institution, recently reelected Professor John Orr as chairman. He has led the standardization movement in South Africa since its inception more than thirty years ago.

It is reported in the daily press that the University of Lublin, Poland, has been formally adopted for the duration of the war by Fordham University. The Reverend Robert I. Gannon, S.J., president of the university, pointed out that the adoption was "a slight return for the cultural help and influence which our universities have received from the Old World."

DISCUSSION

TRYPTOPHAN AND PHYTOHORMONE PRECURSORS

It has been shown by different workers^{1,2,3} that certain plant tissues, upon alkaline hydrolysis, give much larger yields of auxin than unhydrolyzed tissues.

¹ G. S. Avery, Jr., J. Berger and B. Shalucha, *Amer. Jour. Bot.*, 28: 596-607, 1941.

² A. J. Haagen Smit, W. D. Leech and W. R. Bergren, *Amer. Jour. Bot.*, 29: 500-506, 1942.

³ E. S. J. Hatcher, *Nature*, 151: 278-279, 1943.

This and related work has established the existence of one or more naturally occurring compounds which have been called auxin "precursors"; they become auxin only after suitable treatment. The chemical identity of such precursors has not been established, but a suggestive paper has been published recently.⁴ It reports that the amino acid tryptophan, upon alkaline hydrolysis, yields an auxin which is presumably

⁴ S. A. Gordon and S. G. Wildman, *Jour. Biol. Chem.*, 147: 389-398, 1943.