

## University and Educational Intelligence

CAMBRIDGE.—It has been recommended that one University lectureship in forestry be transferred from the Faculty of Agriculture to the Department of Botany, and that the lectureship be called the University lectureship in forest botany.

LONDON.—The following appointments have recently been made: Capt. G. T. R. Hill to the Kennedy chair of engineering (University College); Dr. L. P. Garrod to the University readership in bacteriology (St. Bartholomew's Hospital Medical College); Dr. G. R. Cameron to the University readership in morbid anatomy (University College Hospital Medical School); Mr. John D. Cowley to the directorship of the University School of Librarianship at University College.

The Dunn exhibitions in anatomy and physiology for 1934 have been awarded respectively to Mr. Alfred Cohen (University College) and Mr. A. J. Bernfeld (Middlesex Hospital Medical School).

WALES.—University College, Cardiff, has received a further gift of £1,000 from the Rothschild residuary fund. It has been decided to expend the greater part of the sum on library purposes.

Sir Howell Williams, of Corris, Merioneth, has promised £10,000 for the new college building scheme of the University College at Aberystwyth. This scheme is estimated to cost £500,000. Lady Gladstone of Hawarden has offered to endow two Rendel Memorial Scholarships as a memorial to the late Lord Rendel.

The University College of North Wales at Bangor celebrates its jubilee this year.

HISTORY and geography teaching, considered in relation to the problems of 'moral disarmament', is dealt with in several papers published in the December issue of the League of Nations' *Educational Survey*. There is, first, the full text of a lecture by M. Maurette, assistant director of the International Labour Office, giving a vivid presentation of methods whereby history and geography teaching in primary and secondary schools may help their pupils to grow up "to realise the only hope for the salvation of man on earth and the law which must govern the inhabitants of a globe whose limits are shrinking daily and whose different parts are becoming increasingly members one of another". It is followed by two authoritative *communiqués* concluding an acrimonious debate provoked by an article which appeared in a previous issue of the *Survey*. The position of the writer of the article, Mrs. Corbett Ashby, as a delegate at the Disarmament Conference necessarily aggravated the seriousness of her accusations that "national and racial animosity are inculcated by teachers . . . in obedience to false ideals of morality". A communication from Dr. C. W. Kimmins includes a memorandum by Dr. C. B. Firth on the general characteristics of the way in which children are now encouraged to learn history in English schools, and emphasises that for the last twenty years the kind of geography taught in the majority of schools in England has been equally unlike anything that Mrs. Ashby described and rightly condemned.

## Science News a Century Ago

### "Great Points in Electricity"

In 1834 Faraday was approaching the end of the electro-chemical researches which had occupied him for the previous two years. His paper on the "Electricity of the Voltaic Pile" was read before the Royal Society in June of that year, and a few days earlier, on May 29, he wrote in his Diary a short passage which gives an interesting indication of his ideas on electrolytic conduction at the time. He hoped that electrolysis might afford a means of distinguishing between elementary and compound bodies.

The passage, which is headed "Great Points in Electricity which require to be decided", shows that he had grown accustomed to using the new word 'ion': "Is not the existence of compound *ions* assumed rather than proved? Has an acid or a base yet been determined to the electrodes except in a solution, and would they go in equivalent proportions in ordry. salt? In fact is it not the simple bodies only which truly and freely traverse? This not yet definitely decided."

"If there are; still, may we not by Electrical relations of the simple *ions* distinguish between real elements and such as we may think to be such because we have not decomposed them? That is, will not electricity prove to be the test between bodies really simple and those which are compound? If so, probably our present elements are true and ultimate elements."

### Death of Laumont

On June 1, 1834, the French mineralogist, François Pierre Nicholas Gillet de Laumont, died in Paris. Born on May 28, 1747, he was educated at a military school and served in the army from 1772 until 1784. He was then appointed an inspector of mines and devoted his leisure to the study of mineralogy. He wrote many papers for the *Annales des Mines* and assisted in organising the Paris School of Mines. The mineral laumontite was named after him by Haiüy.

### London and Birmingham Railway

On June 1, 1834, at Chalk Farm, the first sod was cut for the London and Birmingham Railway, the first main trunk line in Great Britain. The royal assent to the bill for its construction had been obtained on May 6, 1833, after a Parliamentary struggle which had cost the promoters of the line £72,869. Robert Stephenson, then thirty years of age, had carried out the surveys for the line, and though there was much opposition, the directors on September 7, 1833, resolved "That Mr. Robert Stephenson be appointed engineer-in-chief for the whole line at a salary of £1,500 per annum, and an addition of £200 per annum to cover all contingent expenses, subject to the rules and regulations for the engineers' department, as approved by the respective committees". Fixing his residence in St. John's Wood, and with the Eyre Arms Hotel as his office, Stephenson reserved for his own personal supervision a length of about nine miles from Maiden Lane, Camden Town, and divided the remaining 103 miles into four districts, each under an assistant engineer. The actual construction of the line was entrusted to about twenty contractors, but the completion of