

ures and the General Conference voted to substitute "Celsius."

In the interest of eventual uniformity of practice, the use of "Celsius" appears desirable, the Bureau report states, but "it is not practicable to impose this term on those who prefer 'centigrade.'" The report considered the decision as strictly applying only to French because the choice was made on that basis.

SOUND IN ST. LOUIS

ACOUSTICAL SOCIETY MEETS

The small number of papers at the thirty-eighth meeting of the Acoustical Society of America, held in St. Louis November 17-19, 1949, made it possible to dispense with simultaneous sessions and to have a relatively uncrowded program with ample allowance for discussion. The result was an intimate, relaxed atmosphere which was reminiscent of the prewar meetings of the Society.

Because of the distance of St. Louis from the population centers on the East and West Coasts and perhaps also because of the letdown from the twentieth anniversary meeting, both the number of papers presented (47) and the number of registrants (181) were the smallest in some years. On the other hand, the number attending the technical sessions and the banquet represented an unusually large fraction of the registration.

In the first paper of the meeting Hale J. Sabine reported a beginning in the task of reconciling the absorption coefficient values measured by different methods and in different test chambers. Activities in this field had come to an abrupt halt in 1939. The remainder of the morning session was concerned with other problems in architectural acoustics. An invited paper by H. C. Roberts began the Thursday afternoon session in which he reported work in determining experimentally the natural frequencies of the vibration of large structures such as bridges. Large mechanical vibrators and strain gauge detectors are used. H. M. Trent described a different type of "experimental" determination of the normal modes of slim, elongated structures such as skyscrapers and ships; in this method two cross-coupled electrical transmission lines, suitably tapered, are used to simulate the vibrational characteristics of the structure. Electrical measurements on the transmission lines permit the determination of the first few normal modes of the structure represented. Other papers on vibration were presented on the same program.

The Friday sessions on psycho-acoustics were the most outstanding sessions of the Society within the writer's memory. All of the nineteen papers were interesting and were well presented. Highlights of the program were S. R. Silverman's impressions of speech and hearing activities abroad; H. K. Dunn's demonstration by tape recordings of the life-like vowels produced by his electrical transmission line simulator of the vocal tract; Wayne Rudmose's work in resolving a discrepancy existing since 1933 between the thresholds for minimum audible field and minimum audible pressure; a theory of A. MacDonald and R. H. Bolt to explain the masking effect of reverberation on the intelligibility of speech; J. C. R. Lick-

lider's discussion of the mechanism of the auditory frequency selectivity; and the discussions of the anatomy of the ear and of the fenestration operation by Walter P. Covell, M.D. and T. E. Walsh, M.D.

The Saturday sessions carried the papers whose subject matter did not fit into the previous sessions. Two independently developed ultrasonic microphones were described by Clayton H. Allen and by Herbert W. Cooper. The current status of the electrostatic speaker development at Harvard University was treated by Arthur A. Janszen. Two papers by P. J. Westervelt and by U. Ingard and S. Labate were concerned with the nonlinear phenomena connected with sound passing through circular apertures. A very detailed experimental and theoretical analysis of the modes of a rectangular whistle was given by W. L. Nyborg and C. L. Woodbridge.

—R. Clark Jones

ARTS AND SCIENCES

150TH ANNIVERSARY OF CONNECTICUT ACADEMY

The Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences, founded in 1799 by a group of colonial scholars who first met in the old State House in New Haven, celebrated on November 4 its one thousandth meeting with a special program in the Yale University Art Gallery. This, according to a Yale announcement, featured a discussion of cosmic rays by Thomas H. Johnson, chairman of Brookhaven's physics department, an excursion into biology by Berkeley nuclear physicist Max Delbruck, and a concerto for trumpet and bassoon composed by Paul Hindemith, professor of the theory of music at Yale.

Ezra Stiles, Yale's seventh president, attempted as early as 1781 to stimulate interest in founding an academy dedicated to art and science, the announcement stated, but the then uncordial relations between Yale and Connecticut authorities led the State legislature to refuse to charter the proposed organization. Some eighteen years later the path became smoothed, perhaps, it is suggested, because the governor and the lieutenant governor had been made Yale College Fellows by virtue of their office, and the academy received its charter. Its first president was Timothy Dwight of Yale and its first vice president was Jonathan Trumbull, then governor of Connecticut.

HONORS AND AWARDS

PHYSICISTS HONORED IN GREAT BRITAIN

One of the two Royal Medals for 1949, awarded following recommendations made by the British Royal Society Council which were formally approved by King George, has been presented to Sir George Thomson in recognition of his many contributions to atomic physics, and especially for his work in establishing the wave properties of the electron. Among the other medals recently presented by the Royal Society are the Copley Medal, awarded to G. C. de Hevesy for his work on radioactive elements and tracer techniques; the Sylvester Medal, awarded to L. J. Mordell for his mathematical work in the theory of numbers; and the Hughes Medal, awarded to C. F. Powell for his work in recording the tracks of high energy particles in photographic emulsions.