

Institute doings

The October Meeting

IT HAD BEEN EXPECTED that the gathering of physicists in Chicago on the occasion of the AIP twentieth anniversary would be the largest such gathering yet held anywhere. Actually the crowd that came exceeded expectations. It numbered well over 4000, those who took the trouble to register being 3510. In one all-day session, the Thursday "Symposium on Physics Today", about 3000 persons comfortably filled the Chicago Civic Opera House. Chairman G. R. Harrison remarked that "there are more physicists in this hall this morning than there were in the whole country in the late '20's." 900 physicists and guests filled the Hotel Sherman Ball Room for the Anniversary Banquet.

Aside from the Symposium, the Banquet, and the Instrument Exhibition, the meeting was composed primarily of the regular sessions of the Member Societies. The Optical Society and the Acoustical Society started things off with papers on Tuesday and Wednesday. The Society of Rheology and the American Crystallographic Association got really rolling on Wednesday and ran into Saturday. The Physical Society cooperated in special sessions on Wednesday, one being a program of the new Division of Chemical Physics, and then held eighteen sessions on Friday and Saturday. The last of these was a joint session with the Philosophy of Science Association. The American Association of Physics Teachers met through Friday and Saturday in five sessions. These formal proceedings of so many societies in so many sessions, including 400 papers, overtaxed the unusually abundant facilities of the Sherman Hotel so that several rooms of the Hotel Morrison nearby had to be drawn upon. One of the many problems confronting the AIP staff in preparing for this meeting had been the assignment of rooms of various sizes to the various sessions. In several instances they proved too small but mostly turned out all right. The staggering of the meetings helped and also avoided sessions of closely competing interest.

Since all members have received the October *Physics Today* with the entire program outlined, it would not be desirable, nor is there enough space here, to list the papers presented. Abstracts of most of them will be published as usual in the appropriate journals.

The greatest general interest was exhibited at the "Symposium on Physics Today". This was to be expected in view of the distinction of the speakers and their known skill in presenting the subjects of their studies. The audience was not disappointed and the

Institute is most grateful to Messrs. Fermi, Condon, Slater, Fletcher, Land, and Darrow. We have received many messages of approval and urgings to publish the talks. This magazine is in fact planning to carry them in the next several issues as fast as the editing process makes them ready.

Undoubtedly, for some, the Instrument Exhibition was the most attractive feature of the whole week. The hall was completely filled with booths and in each were displays that made a strong claim for the attention of the several thousand who repeatedly took time out from sessions to throng the corridors of the exhibition. The Institute has reason to believe that not only the observers but also the exhibitors were well pleased to have been there. As was the case fifteen years ago, the AIP is now being urged to "do something like this more frequently". In addition to the excellent commercial exhibits, there were extremely interesting displays sponsored by the Argonne National Laboratories, the National Bureau of Standards, the Office of Naval Research, and the Wright Air Development Center. These were good illustrations of the interesting types of physics research sponsored by these agencies. The AIP had a booth, one feature of which presented the story of a manuscript going through the AIP publishing department from acceptance to appearance in a journal. The Lancaster Press, printer of AIP journals, showed a Monotype keyboard in operation, setting highly mathematical articles for forthcoming issues.

The banquet was presided over by P. E. Klopsteg, chairman of the Institute's committee on arrangements for this meeting, who introduced some of those who had played a part in the development of the AIP. A scroll was presented to Treasurer G. B. Pegram on the occasion of his 75th birthday. K. T. Compton, first Chairman of the AIP, told the gathering how and why the Institute came into existence. There then followed the principal address of the evening on "Science and Statecraft" by our guest of honor, Senator Brien McMahon, Chairman of the Joint Congressional Committee on Atomic Energy. His stirring call for expanded efforts to develop atomic energy could not fail to interest physicists and concern them all in one manner or another.

The AIP Placement Service operated a special register on the floor below the Instrument Exhibition. Such a register is regularly held in New York at the end of January. This "extra" effort was put forward partly because of the crying need of companies and defense agencies for physicists and partly to meet the convenience of those who could come to Chicago more easily than to New York.

In retrospect the AIP collectively feels very happy about the 20th Anniversary Meeting. The anniversary aspect was not the important thing. The size, spirit, and success of the occasion are what mattered, and these only because they demonstrated to all of us and to all observers the importance, the magnitude, and the quality of the field of united human endeavor called physics.

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