Miscellany

Infrared Group Organized

Formation of the Coblentz Society, named in honor of retired NBS physicist W. W. Coblentz, has been announced by a committee on infrared spectroscopy which was organized at last year's Ohio State Conference on Molecular Structure and Spectroscopy. The purpose of the new society is "to foster the understanding and application of infrared spectra. As it becomes desirable and feasible the scope may be broadened to include other types of spectra." The organization is concerning itself initially with such matters as the problem of adequate coverage of infrared subjects at scientific meetings, suitable means of publishing infrared analytical methods applied to specific mixtures, the promotion of programs for collecting and disseminating infrared spectra of chemical compounds, establishment of a cooperative study of the problem of variations in absorption coefficients as obtained on different infrared spectrometers, and participation in the recommending of standards relating to infrared. The enrollment fee is $1.00. For further information write to Dr. V. Z. Williams, Perkin-Elmer Instrument Company, Stamford, Connecticut.

Research Facilities

The George B. Pegram Laboratory, a $350 000 physics research facility now under construction at Columbia University in New York City, is scheduled to be completed in August. A substantial part of the building's cost is being provided by the Atomic Energy Commission, which will also furnish a new 6 Mev Van de Graaff generator on indefinite loan for use in the laboratory. The building will stand next to the eastern end of the present Pupin Physics Laboratories building on the Columbia campus and the two structures will be connected below ground by a continuous basement. The new accelerator will serve to augment studies of problems in low-energy nuclear physics which have been carried on at Columbia for a number of years with the help of the "venerable" 20 Mev cyclotron in the basement of Pupin Laboratory. Present plans for the Van de Graaff generator call for a continuation of the systematic measurement of cross sections and nuclear energy levels. The laboratory is named in honor of Dean George B. Pegram, emeritus vice president and special advisor to the president of Columbia University, who has been associated with the University for the past half-century. He became dean of the Columbia School of Mines, Engineering, and Chemistry in 1918, a post he held until 1930, and was dean of the Graduate Faculties from 1937 to 1949. For many years Dean Pegram has served as treasurer of the American Physical Society and of the American Institute of Physics.

A new section for heat and power research has been established at the Franklin Institute Laboratories in Philadelphia. The section is headed by Francis L. Jackson and will largely be concerned with problems inherent in the design of nuclear power plants. The nuclear physics staff of the Franklin Institute's Bartol Research Foundation will be available for consultation and assistance.

An industrial research reactor to be owned and operated by private industry has been proposed by the American Machine & Foundry Company. It has been estimated that the reactor and its supporting laboratory facilities (planned for construction on a 250-acre site in the New York area) will cost something over one million dollars and can be built and available for use within eighteen months. The program, however, will first require licensing by the Atomic Energy Commission. Present plans visualize a high-flux, solid-fuel reactor employing a core similar to that in the AEC's Materials Testing Reactor. The company, one of the first to join the AEC industrial participation program on an individual basis, has announced that several firms representing a number of different industries have been invited to take part in the proposed program on a cooperative basis.

General Electric has announced that it will enter into a contract with Washington State College to study the installation of a nuclear reactor of the swimming pool variety at Pullman, Washington. A G-E spokesman said the contract will be the first phase of an over-all program designed to have a reactor in operation in two years. Harold M. Dodgen, director of the College's nuclear reactor project, is in charge of the program.

India has contracted to buy ten tons of heavy water from the United States to use as a moderator for a research reactor to be located in the vicinity of Bombay. U. S. Atomic Energy Commission Chairman Lewis L. Strauss announced on February 12th that the AEC had agreed to the request of the Government of India for the sale, adding his hope that the action would be "only a first important step" in a broader collaboration with friendly nations to promote the peaceful uses of atomic energy.

AEC Research Contracts

Forty-nine contracts in support of unclassified physical research have been awarded by the Atomic Energy Commission recently, of which all but six represented renewals of contracts already in force. The new contracts, totalling almost $80 000, are: University of Illinois, occurrence of technetium in nature (E. A. Alperovitch) and diffusionless phase changes in non-