NOTES AND NEWS

REPORT ON THE MODERN LANGUAGE CONFERENCE IN PORTLAND

The Modern Language Conference held in connection with the N. E. A. meetings in New York, in July, 1916, having proved such a pronounced success (see *Journal*, I. 41f.), it was decided to repeat the experiment this year in Portland, Oregon, and the undersigned was appointed to arrange for the program and preside at the meetings. The quiet library room in the beautiful new Lincoln High School building was set apart for the Conference and afforded ample room, not only for the meetings, but also for an effective display of modern language textbooks and periodicals, of which Mr. Carleton Ames Wheeler, of the Hollywood High School, Los Angeles, had charge. The attendance at the opening of the Conference was 65, and grew steadily, till the number of those present the second afternoon was approximately 130.

The committee appointed to arrange for the Conference consisted of the following, beside the chairman: Mr. Carleton Ames Wheeler, president of the M. L. A. of Southern California; Miss Martha A. Ijams, secretary of the Romanic Language Association of California; Dr. Wm. R. Price, superintendent of Modern Language Instruction in the State of New York; and Professor J. P. Hoskins, president of the Eastern Federation of Modern Language Teachers' Associations.

The following papers were read:

1. Ideals of the Profession, by Professor W. A. Cooper, Stanford University.
2. University Training of the High School Teacher of Modern Languages with Particular Reference to French, by Professor Oliver M. Johnston, Stanford University.
3. Directed Observation and Practice Teaching, by Miss Lydia M. Schmidt, University High School, Chicago.
4. Downward Extension of the Modern Language Curriculum, by Dr. I. C. Hatch, Polytechnic High School, San Francisco.
5. The Place of a Foreign Language in an Education, by Miss Roberta Tanquary, A.M., Technical High School, Oakland, Cal.
6. Interest as a Factor in Modern Language Teaching, by Miss Anna M. Tietjen, High School of Commerce, San Francisco.

7. Practical Classroom Devices for the Modern Language Teacher, by Mr. Carleton Ames Wheeler, Hollywood High School, Los Angeles.

8. The Place of Poetry in the Teaching of French, by Miss Laurence H. Péchin, High School of Commerce, San Francisco.

9. What Spain has to Offer to the American Teacher, by Mrs. Mary P. Cox, Manual Arts High School, Los Angeles.

10. The Organization of High-School Work in Spanish, by Miss Margaret C. Dowling, Mission High School, San Francisco.

11. The Standardization of Instruction in German, by Professor F. W. Meisnest, University of Washington.

12. The Use of Wall Pictures for Conversation and Composition in German, with Demonstrations, by Dr P. E. Schwabe, Head of Department of German, City High Schools, Portland.

13. How to Spend a Year in Germany with Profit and Pleasure, by Professor Charlotte A. Knoch, Stanford University.

There was one other paper on the printed program, but the speaker failed to appear.

Nos. 8, 9, and 10 were read in a section meeting of teachers of the Romance languages, while 11, 12, and 13 were read in a corresponding section meeting of teachers of German. Beside these section meetings, which were held simultaneously, there were three general sessions of the Conference.

As the papers will doubtless all, or nearly all, be published, it is not necessary here to give a résumé of their contents.

The discussions of the papers were characterized by perfect freedom and real earnestness, and showed that the teachers present were deeply interested in the problems of their profession and were by no means behind the times, as one might, without thinking, be inclined to expect of colleagues working on the frontier. But it would be a mistake to think of the Pacific States nowadays as a frontier in matters educational. This statement is based on remarks made by prominent colleagues from east of the Mississippi, who attended the four sessions in Portland.

The seriousness of the teachers became apparent during the round-table discussions. Provision had been made on the program for four such free-for-all discussions, the following topics having been proposed: (1) Professional Periodicals and Affiliations, (2) Direct Method and Expansion of Curriculum, (3) Textbooks—

Do they lead or lag? (4) Self-help and Daily Growth. But, instead of being satisfied with discussing these topics, the meeting showed clearly that it was in a mood for action. The question of organizing the Pacific States in harmony with the eastern Federation and the Central West Association was raised, and a committee was appointed to draw up a tentative constitution. As was naturally to be expected, there were various interests and prejudices to be considered in the first attempt at organization, and, knowing such would be the case, the chairman insisted at all times that whatever was done in Portland should be looked upon as merely tentative, for the organizations that would be concerned in a federation had not been asked to send instructed delegates, and a federation should adopt a constitution of its own making, not one made by the teachers in attendance at Portland. A tentative constitution was adopted and a motion was passed that the Portland meeting should be considered the first annual meeting of the new Association, even though only two temporary officers were elected (president, Professor Johnston, Stanford University; secretary-treasurer, Mr. Carleton Ames Wheeler, Los Angeles), and the organization was still far from completed.

The chairman's full report on the organization, together with some proposals for the final constitution, will appear in an early number of the *Modern Language Bulletin*, published by the M. L. A. of Southern California.

The direct method came up for discussion early on the program, and while there was some diversity of opinion as to the definition of the term, there was no division as to the desirability of using the direct principle wherever properly qualified teachers are employed. A vote on this point seemed to be demanded by the meeting, and, when the question was put, the Conference went on record as unanimously in favor of the direct principle of teaching the modern foreign languages.

Unfortunately, the textbook discussion had to be omitted, partly to leave time for effecting the temporary organization, and partly because the sessions were adjourned on scheduled time, to prevent regrettable long-drawn-out endings to snappy meetings.

A fine spirit pervaded the meetings, and the good accomplished will be heard from, not only this year, but for years to come.

W. A. COOPER, Chairman.

Stanford University.