

## REPORT OF THE NEW YORK ASSOCIATION OF BIOLOGY TEACHERS.

At the April meeting of the N. Y. Association of Biology Teachers the chief feature of the program was a debate on the question: Resolved that it is to the best interests of education that Biology be required of all first year pupils in the High School.

Mr. Bedford of the Brooklyn Commercial High School opened the debate for the affirmative. He claimed for science in general a prominent place in the curriculum of Secondary Schools for three reasons: (1) its value in inculcating proper habits of thought, (2) its value from the standpoint of culture, (3) its practical utility. In considering the claims of Biology to be the science best adapted for the first year, the character of the course to be taught is the thing to be considered. A course covering abstract biological principles, a comprehensive study of morphology, histology, and embryology should not be attempted earlier than the fourth year. A course intended to train in right habits of thought and to teach a few of the more important biological principles which have influenced modern life, may come in the first year. It should also give the child a keen interest in living things and some insight into their economic importance. It should lead him also to realize also the importance of personal hygiene. The addition of a few fundamental facts in Physics and Chemistry, which are necessary to comprehend the Biology, does not require much time. The result of such a combination is a first year course in science which appeals to pupils of that age as no other one science can.

Dr. Linville, of the DeWitt Clinton High School, opened for the negative. He claimed that the reason for its place in the first year was the legal requirement of teaching Physiology then, which is not conclusive evidence that either belongs there. Many pupils leave the high school at the end of the first year, and the desire to give as great a number as possible some biological training is urged as another reason. This reason might apply equally well to other sciences, such as economics.

When for these reasons it is taught in the first year, it cannot be taught as a science, but is an informational subject. This is not the proper way to teach it. "Biology should be taught for its principles, (1) because of the basis given to human physiology, a subject most useful on account of the relation a scientific understanding of the subject among educated people has to the solution of problems of public health; (2) because if education is 'adaptation to environment' it is necessary for men to comprehend their relation to the range of organic life, to understand the evolutionary processes which made man's existence possible, and to grasp the situation as it exists today as portrayed in the economic relation of man to all organic things. Biology should be taught scientifically; (3) because of the useful application of the doctrine of organic evolution to knowledge in general, and (4) because the easy approach to the comprehension of the mental life of man is through the study of the behavior of animals."

If the proper position of the sciences is to be learned, their logical relation must be considered. Chemistry and Physics do not presuppose a course in Biology, but some knowledge of these subjects is necessary for even informational first year Biology. The logical order is therefore Chemistry, Physics, Biology, since it is a waste of time to prime pupils on diluted Chemistry and Physics for a precarious understanding of Biology.

In the general discussion which followed the opening speeches, it was contended that "expediency" was a proper reason for placing Biology in the first year, since the teacher must teach the children who have not been brought up in ideal conditions and do the best thing for them rather than teach an ideal course. The average High School boy knows nothing of nature and will never learn to love it unless his interest is kindled before the last year of his course. He will not be able to comprehend biological principles then if he has no previous familiarity with common growing things. Since at present nature study in the city graded schools is for various reasons most inadequate, it must not be depended upon to furnish much biological information. In closing it was generally conceded that it is impossible to settle upon the best time, without at first agreeing upon the character of the course and that the character of the course depends largely on the previous training and environment of the pupils.

MARTHA F. GODDARD, *Secretary.*

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### MEETING OF THE CENTRAL ASSOCIATION OF SCIENCE AND MATHEMATICS TEACHERS.

The seventh annual meeting of the Central Association of Science and Mathematics Teachers will be held at the McKinley High School, St. Louis, on Friday and Saturday, November 29 and 30, 1907. The speakers on the general program are Professor Florian Cajori, Colorado College, Professor S. W. Stratton of the Bureau of Standards, Washington, and Superintendent Soldam of St. Louis. Among the speakers on the sections programs are: George B. Halsted, Greeley, Colo., E. R. Hedrick, Columbia, Mo., G. C. Shutts, Whitewater, Wis., W. H. Henderson, Ann Arbor, Mich., Lindley Pyle, St. Louis, F. H. Ayers, Kansas City, Mo., W. A. Noyes, Urbana, Ill., Lynds Jones, Oberlin, Ohio, William Trelease, St. Louis, H. W. Norris, Grinnell, Iowa, N. A. Harvey, Ypsilanti, Mich., W. W. Harte, Indianapolis, Ind., J. A. Drushei, Teachers' College, St. Louis, and Ormond R. Miller, The Blow School, St. Louis.

On Friday evening a supper will be given for the members of the Association at a charge of fifty cents a plate. Several excursions to points of interest have been arranged for Saturday afternoon, among which that to the Missouri Botanical Garden will be of general interest. The meeting promises to be a large and enthusiastic one. The local St. Louis committee are sparing no effort to make the 1907 meeting the banner session. The program is rich in interest and should call out a large attendance. More detailed announcement will be made in the next issue of this magazine and in the programs which will soon be ready for distribution.