

A. A. S. Elects

History of Science

At the recent New York meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science Robert Andrews Millikan, director of the Norman Bridge Laboratory of Physics of the California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, was named president of the Association for the ensuing year.

Dr. Millikan, recipient of the Nobel prize for his pre-eminent work in physics, has been most conspicuously before the public eye lately because of his researches on the highly penetrating short-wave radiations which have been given the popular name "cosmic rays". To physicists, however, he is known even better as a versatile and successful worker in the fields of electricity, radiant energy and the newer atomic mechanics. He received his training at Oberlin, Columbia, Berlin and Göttingen. Until he went to his present post in 1921 he was professor of physics at the University of Chicago.

Other officers named by the Association are as follows: General secretary, F. R. Lillie; permanent secretary, B. E. Livingston; treasurer, J. L. Wirt; auditor, Lyman J. Briggs; members of the council, L. O. Howard, D. T. MacDougal; members of the committee on grants, C. P. Berkeley, C. W. White; members of the executive committee, Vernon Kellogg, E. B. Wilson, K. T. Compton; member of the finance committee, G. K. Burgess; trustee of Science Service, Raymond Pearl.

Sectional vice-presidents and secretaries are as follows: A, E. T. Bell, C. N. Moore; B, C. E. Mendenhall, A. L. Hughes; C, S. C. Lind, R. R. Renshaw; D, Harlow Shapley, Philip Fox; E, G. F. Kay, K. F. Mather; F, C. M. Child, G. T. Hargitt; G, J. Arthur Harris, S. F. Trelease; H, A. V. Kiddler, C. H. Danforth; I, Madison Bentley, E. S. Robinson; K, H. L. Rietz, C. F. Roos; L, Henry O. Taylor, Leonard Bloomfield (Subsection on Linguistics); Joseph Mayer (Subsection on Historical Sciences); M, H. F. Moore, N. H. Heck; N, Ludvig Hektoen, E. V. Cowdry; O, M. F. Miller, P. E. Brown; P, F. N. Freeman, W. L. Uhl.

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A nation-wide movement has been launched to put signs on the roofs of certain buildings in every town and city to guide aviators.

Elements' Decay Described

Chemistry

How the actual disintegration of one element to another, the goal sought in vain by the ancient alchemists, has been found to be continually occurring without human aid, and has opened a new domain in science, was explained by Prof. A. A. Noyes. Prof. Noyes is the director of the Gates Chemical Laboratory of the California Institute of Technology, and he spoke as retiring president of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

Thirty years ago, said Dr. Noyes, about a dozen of the 89 chemical elements had not been discovered. Today all are known except three. Then atoms were supposed to look like small solid balls and to be indestructible. Today they are known to resemble miniature solar systems. Some, like those of radium, are found to be disintegrating spontaneously into simpler elements, while others

can be made to disintegrate by bombarding them with helium particles.

Helium itself, now prepared in quantity large enough to fill huge dirigibles, was discovered in 1895. Since that time, it has been found that helium nuclei are probably building stones in the construction of the other atoms.

Dr. Noyes showed by ingenious models how helium nuclei, themselves first formed of protons, which are hydrogen nuclei, and electrons, unite with one another and with more protons and electrons to produce the nuclei of more complex atoms.

The natural breaking up of radium with emission of helium into a series of elements which finally forms lead, all of which has been discovered within the past 30 years, was cited by Dr. Noyes as further proof of the way atoms are built.

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