

GENERAL SCIENCE

New Government Groupings Expected to Promote Research

Division of Public Works in Interior Department Would be a Major Creation of President Hoover's Orders

SCIENTIFIC research will be promoted and not hindered by the reorganization of the federal executive departments which will be effective in February upon executive orders issued under Congressional authority by President Hoover and reported to Congress. This is the expected general feeling in scientific circles.

Unless Congress rejects the reorganization plans, the following major changes in organizational location of scientific and engineering bureaus of the federal government will be made:

The U. S. Public Health Service, now in the Treasury Department, will be transferred to the Interior Department and made part of a new division of education, health and recreation, which will include bureaus with these functions now largely in the Interior Department.

A new division of public works is also established in the Department of the Interior and practically all of the non-military engineering activities of the War Department, which include rivers and harbors, flood control, and similar work, are incorporated into it.

The Bureau of Public Roads, now in the Department of Agriculture, is placed in this public works division of the Interior Department, thus giving it jurisdiction over the extensive federal aid highway program.

The Treasury's Supervising Architect office is also transferred to the Interior's public works division, and numerous commissions and offices dealing with government construction and purchasing are brought together in the same division for economical administration.

The General Land Office of the Interior Department is given to the Department of Agriculture and grouped with the Forest Service, the Biological Survey and the Bureau of Chemistry and Soils, already in the department, into a division of land utilization.

The Hydrographic Office of the Navy and the Naval Observatory are incorporated into a new Department of Com-

merce merchant marine division, and the Hydrographic Office is merged with the Coast and Geodetic Survey. In the same new subdivision there will be located the United States Shipping Board Emergency Fleet Corporation.

The Weather Bureau, long in the Department of Agriculture, is fitted into the Commerce Department among bureaus that serve commerce and industry. The National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics, which has been an active independent research establishment since the World War days, is merged with Commerce's Bureau of Standards.

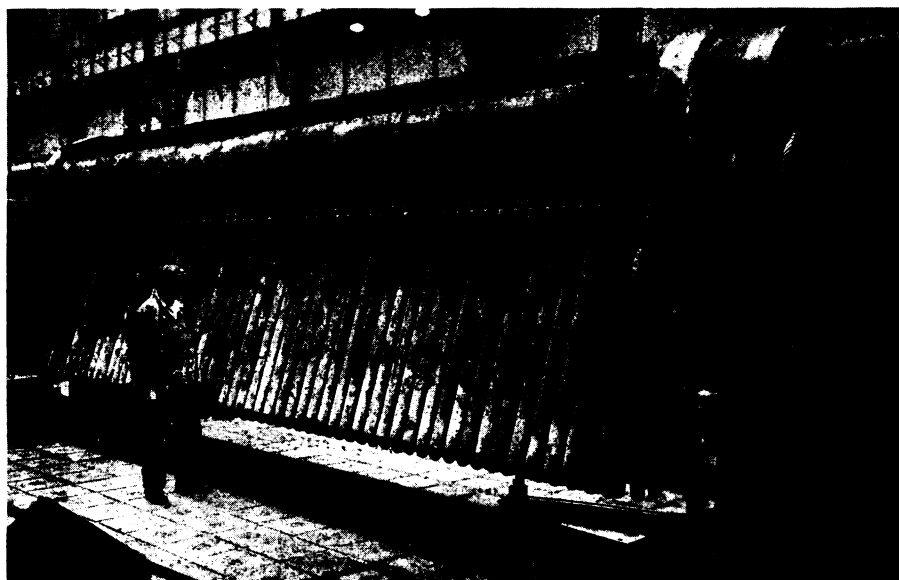
Those interested in the advance of public health are expected to view with favor the alignment of the U. S. Public Health Service in the education, health and recreation group of the Interior Department. The division of vital statistics of the Department of Commerce's census bureau is transferred to the Public Health Service and this is expected to facilitate the keeping of the nation's

health record. The health activities of the Children's Bureau of the Department of Labor are not affected, however, by President Hoover's orders, although the conflict in functions between the Children's Bureau and the Public Health Service has been discussed in the past.

The placing of engineering activities of the government under civilian control and the grouping of public works activities will undoubtedly meet with the acclaim of the engineering profession represented by the Engineering Council and other bodies. This move has been advocated by engineers in the past. Army officers will in the immediate future continue direction and operation of the public works activities that have been entrusted to the Army's Chief of Engineers, since President Hoover's orders provide that they shall be detailed to the Interior Department.

President Hoover in consolidating the Navy's Hydrographic Office with the U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey brings together two bureaus that have had overlapping functions. Astronomers are expected to view with favor the transference of the Naval Observatory to civilian control in the Department of Commerce. Its superintendent has been a line naval officer detailed for relatively short tenure and, while this administration may be continued for a time after the transfer, it is expected that eventually the head will be a civilian.

Science News Letter, December 17, 1932



BRISTLING MERCURY BOILER

Mercury, replacing commonly used water, will be vaporized within this porcupine boiler drum to turn the 20,000-kilowatt turbine of a new power plant at Schenectady, N. Y. Seven boilers will be installed in the plant. They will require 270,000 pounds of mercury, which is 89 per cent. of the average annual consumption in the United States. A shipment this size has just been received for the Kearny station in New Jersey.