

THE NOBEL PRIZES.*

BY JOHN LUND.

(Vice-President of the Nobel Peace Prize Committee.)

THE engineer, Dr. Alfred Bernhard Nobel, son of the inventor Imanuel Nobel, was born in Stockholm in 1833, but he lived most of his life in foreign countries. He died at San Remo, December 10, 1896. A series of great inventions of explosives, as nitroglycerine, dynamite, etc., has made his name known over the whole world and won for him a great fortune. The hope of Mr. Nobel was that his inventions would be to the benefit of mankind, and he observed with sorrow the rôle they played also for the purposes of war. His hope still was that the instruments of destruction should at least reach such a perfection that they would make war impossible. Mr. Nobel resolved that most of his whole fortune, about 30 millions of crowns (£1,660,000), should be used for the benefit of mankind and therefore he drew up a will where, among other things, it is said:

“With the residue of my convertible estate I hereby direct my executors to proceed as follows: They shall convert my said residue of property into money, which they shall then invest in safe securities; the capital thus secured shall constitute a fund, the interest accruing from which shall be annually awarded in prizes to those persons who shall have contributed most materially to benefit mankind during the year immediately preceding. The said interest shall be divided into five equal amounts, to be apportioned as follows: One share to the person who shall have made the most important discovery or invention in the domain of Physics; one share to the person who shall have made the most important Chemical discovery or improvement; one share to the person who shall have made the most important discovery in the domain of Physiology

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or Medicine; one share to the person who shall have produced in the field of Literature the most distinguished work of an idealistic tendency; and, finally, one share to the person who shall have best or most promoted the Fraternity of Nations and the Abolishment or Diminution of Standing Armies and the Formation and Increase of Peace Congresses. The prizes for Physics and Chemistry shall be awarded by the Swedish Academy of Science in Stockholm; the one for Physiology or Medicine by the Caroline Medical Institute in Stockholm; the prize for Literature, by the Academy in Stockholm; and that for Peace by a Committee of five persons to be elected by the Norwegian Storting. I declare it to be my express desire that, in the awarding of prizes, no consideration whatever be paid to the nationality of the candidates, that is to say, that the



MEDAL FOR PHYSICS AND CHEMISTRY.

4179

most deserving be awarded the price, whether of Scandinavian origin or not."

This is the basis of the Nobel Foundation.

The reason why Dr. Nobel resolved that the Norwegian Parliament should distribute the peace prize was because of the great interest and the great work which Norway, through many years, and more than any other country, has devoted to the peace cause. As early as 1890, the Norwegian Parliament had asked King Oscar to try and conclude arbitration treaties with foreign powers. But, in consequence of the fact that Norway had not, as now, its own diplomatic service, and in spite of all effort and admonition on the part of the Norwegian Parliament, this question was not brought forward until 1904. Furthermore, the Norwegian Parliament was the first to offer yearly contributions both to the interparliamentary and the international peace bureaux in Bern, and to pay the ex-

penses of the Norwegian delegates to the interparliamentary peace-conferences. Also in many other ways our Parliament manifested its love for the great purpose of future peace and fraternity among nations.

From the main fund was deducted (a) A sum of 300,000 crowns, (about £16,600) for each of the five sections along with interest from January 1, 1900, for defraying the organization expenses of the Nobel Institute; (b) A sum of about 1,400,000 crowns (about £80,000) for the erection of a building at Stockholm for the offices etc., of the Nobel Foundation. The main fund on the 31st of December, 1904, amounted to about 28 millions of crowns (about



MEDALS FOR
PHYSIOLOGY AND MEDICINE.



LITERATURE.

4180

£1,560,000). From the income of each year are paid the administration expenses etc., of the year; one tenth part of the net income having been added to the main fund, in accordance with Article 21 of the Code of Statutes; the rest is divided into five parts for each of the five sections of the Foundation. Three-fourths of each of these parts constitute each of the Nobel prizes for the ensuing year, while the last fourth is employed for the expenses of each section, chiefly those of the Nobel Institutes. What is not expended during the current year is reserved for the future needs of the Institute. The Nobel prizes of 1905 amount to 138,089 crowns each (about £7,670).

In 1897, the Norwegian Parliament or Storting declared itself willing to undertake the honorable task entrusted to it by Dr. Nobel. It was decided that the members of the Nobel Committee should be elected for a period of six years, two and three retiring alter-

nately every third year. In 1897 the following were elected members:

Mr. Steen, then President of the Storting, later Prime Minister.

Mr. Getz, Director of Public Prosecutions.

Mr. Loevland, then President of the Odelsting or Upper House of Parliament, now Foreign Minister.

Mr. Bjoernstjerne Bjoernson, the poet.

Mr. John Lund, then President of the Lagthing, or Lower House.

On the death of Mr. Getz, in 1901, Mr. Horst, President of the Odelsting, entered the Committee, which is still composed of the same members. Messrs. Bjoernson and Loevland having been re-elected in 1900, and Messrs. Steen, Lund and Horst in 1903.

The Noble peace prize, like the other Nobel prizes, can only be awarded to candidates proposed before February 1, of the year of distribution by a duly qualified person; a direct application for a prize will not be taken into consideration. In conformity with Article 7 of the Code of Statutes, the Nobel Committee of the Norwegian Parliament has decided that any of the following persons may be held to be duly qualified to propose candidates for the Peace Prize:

a. Members and late members of the Nobel Committee of the Norwegian Parliament, as well as the advisers appointed at the Norwegian Nobel Institute.

b. Members of Parliament and members of Government of the different States, as well as members of the Interparliamentary Union.

c. Members of the International Arbitration Court at the Hague.

d. Members of the Commission of the International Peace Bureau.

e. Members of the Institute of International Law.

f. University Professors of Political Science and of Law; of History and Philosophy.

g. Persons who have received the Nobel Peace Prize.

One of the rules reads: "The grounds upon which the proposal of any candidate's name is made must be stated in writing and handed in along with such papers and other documents as may be therein referred to."

The Peace Prize may be granted to an institution or printed work. "The amount allotted to one prize may be divided equally between two works submitted, should each of such works be deemed

to merit a prize. In cases where two or more persons shall have executed a work in conjunction, and that work be awarded a prize, such prize shall be presented to them jointly. The work of any person since deceased cannot be submitted for award; should however, the death of the individual in question have occurred subsequent to a recommendation having been made in due course for his work to receive a prize, such prize may be awarded."

The Peace Prize, as the other Nobel Prizes, must be distributed at least once during each ensuing five-year period. Another rule laid down is that no work shall have a prize awarded to it unless it has been proved by the test of experience or by the examination of experts, to possess the pre-eminent excellence that is manifestly signified by the terms of the Will.



NOBEL PEACE MEDAL.

4181

If it be deemed that not one of the works under examination attains to the standard of excellence above referred to, the sum allotted for the prize or prizes may be withheld until the ensuing year. Should it even then be found impossible, on the same grounds, to make any award, the amount in question may be added to the main fund, unless three-fourths of those engaged in making the award determine that it shall be set aside to form a special fund for that one of the five sections, as defined by the Will, for which the amount was originally intended. The proceeds of any and every such fund may be employed, subject to the approval of the adjudicators, to promote the objects which the testator ultimately had in view in making his bequest, in other ways than by means of prizes.

On Founder's Day, the 10th of December, the anniversary of the death of the testator, the adjudicators make known the results of their award, and hand over to the winners of prizes a cheque

for the amount of the same, together with a diploma and a medal in gold bearing the testator's effigy and a suitable legend.

It is incumbent on a prize-winner, wherever feasible, to give a lecture on the subject treated of in the work to which the prize has been awarded, such lecture to take place within six months after the Founder's Day on which the prize was won, and to be given at Stockholm or, in the case of the Peace Prize, at Christiania.

Against the decision of the adjudicators in making their award, no protest can be lodged. If differences of opinion have occurred they are not to appear in the minutes of the proceedings, nor be in any way made public.

The first distribution of the Peace Prize, as well as that of the other Nobel Prizes, took place in 1901, and so far the Peace Prizes have been awarded as follows:

In 1901, it was divided between Jean Henry Dunant, Founder of the "Red Cross," originator of the Geneva Convention of 1864, and Frédéric Passy, Member of the Institute of France, Founder of the first French Peace Society.

In 1902, it was again divided, one half being given to Elie Ducommun, Honorary Secretary of the Permanent International Peace Bureau at Berne, and the other half to Albert Gobat, LL. D., Member of the Swiss National Council, and Administrator of the Interparliamentary Bureau at Berne.

In 1903, it was awarded to William Randal Cremer, M. P., Founder and Secretary of the "International Arbitration League,"

In 1904, to the International Law Institute, founded in Ghent, Belgium, in 1873, and

In 1905 to Baroness Bertha von Suttner of Vienna.