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Science News

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THE METAL CARBONYLS

By Professor ARTHUR A. BLANCHARD
MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

This meeting is to do honor to a man who was a great scientist, who was later, also, a great administrator, and who, when he reached the age when he could surrender his administrative duties and could enjoy the leisure and rest which he had so fully earned, chose to devote his great energy to the cause of the orderly development of the science of chemistry he loved. Edgar Fahs Smith exemplified the most truly scientific attitude towards chemistry. He championed the importance of accurate finding and recording of facts, and he encouraged the use of theories only as they helped to clarify and classify the facts. A favorite remark of his was to the effect that theories come and theories go, but facts live on forever.

It is, I think, entirely fitting that I should do honor to Professor Smith in telling you the facts about an unusual class of substances, the metal carbonyls, in which I have taken a particular interest, and to show how certain generalizations have helped to some extent to classify and define the relationship among the carbonyls.

Nickel Carbonyl

Nickel carbonyl was discovered by Mond in 1890, and iron pentacarbonyl was discovered shortly thereafter. These strange substances were a challenge to