

ON F.S.C. NORTHROP

Rook McCulloch

The difficulty of using our age old language which grew through thousands of years of myth and poetry is that its very richness makes it unsuitable for scientific exactness. In reporting on some of the emotional and exhausting sessions of the Macy meetings (1946 to 1953) McCulloch said that as chairman of these meetings he was concerned with "keeping our discourse freighted with distinct meanings".

Professor Fil Northrop's solution to this difficult language problem, on the other hand, resulted in a unique language of his own which is well worth the effort of understanding. Bearing in mind that Northrop's scientific career led him through the linguistic pitfalls of psychology, sociology, philosophy, history, and law, not to mention the particularly treacherous grounds of art and literary criticism, one realizes that it is notoriously difficult to make truly unambiguous statements, and that Northrop accepted a great challenge. He is surely one of the clearest-headed, most unambiguous teachers of our day.