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# TRAGIC DEATH OF PROFESSOR SHANN

## Fatal Fall From Window At University

### DELIVERED LAST LECTURE OF TERM FEW MINUTES PREVIOUSLY

### Distinguished Scholar And Historian

### NOTABLE PUBLIC WORK FOR AUSTRALIA

At 7.40 p.m. yesterday, twenty-five minutes after he had delivered an economics lecture at the Adelaide University, Professor E. O. G. Shann was found dying from a fracture of the skull, on a concrete pavement about 15 ft. from the east wall of the main building of the University. He was dead on arrival at the Adelaide Hospital, whence he was conveyed in a civil ambulance a few minutes later. About 30 ft. above where Professor Shann was found a window of a committee room was open. The committee room, which is connected by a door with Professor Shann's office, had not been used during the evening. His wrist watch was broken, and had stopped at 7.35.

So far as could be ascertained late last night, nobody knows what Professor Shann was doing in the twenty minutes that elapsed between his leaving the lecture hall (about two minutes' walk from his office), and the time of his fall.

Shortly after Professor Shann and the students had left the lecture hall, a man called at the hall and asked the assistant caretaker, Mr. O. Worrall, if he knew where Professor Shann was. When Mr. Worrall replied that the professor had probably gone to his office on the second floor of the main building, the man departed. It is not known whether he saw Professor Shann before leaving the University; and, in all the circumstances, little importance is attached to his appearance.

About 7.40 p.m. Miss F. Clarke, a first student, called at the caretaker's office at the front of the main University building to enquire where a Workers' Educational Association lecture was being held. On being told that it would be in a basement room at the rear she walked around the curving driveway on the eastern side of the building. As there is a bright electric light in this vicinity she immediately saw Professor Shann lying face downward at the edge of a concrete pavement, with his head pointing towards the building and his feet in a gutter between the concrete pavement and the driveway.

Hurrying back to the front offices, she informed the assistant registrar (Mr. W. Bampton) and the caretaker (Mr. J. F. Conroy). They found Professor Shann unconscious, with a slight pulse, his head resting on his outstretched left upper arm. About a yard from his head towards the building was the unbroken crystal of his watch, and a yard north of this was the watch movement itself, with the hands pointing to 7.35 exactly. Only the strap on which he had fastened the strap on Professor Shann's wrist. His spectacles were merely discarded on one side.

Constable A. Gartner and Gold-finch arrived in a civil ambulance, and as they were about to place the injured man in the vehicle, Dr. Funder began that he was still alive, although gravely injured. Death took place, however, before his arrival at the hospital, a minute or so later between plainclothes Constables McConnell and Lister, who were joined later by Detective Gill and Firebrides Constables Hanrahan and Sharpe. Investigations, and last night they had a long conference with the Vice-Chancellor (Sir William Mitchell) and other University authorities.

**Health Perfectly Normal**  
Mr. John Stokes, a student who attended Professor Shann's last economic lecture from 6.15 p.m. to 7.15 p.m., said that the professor did not appear at all well as usual. Normally, he lectured in a half-standing position, with one foot on a chair, or behind the long table in the Prince of Wales lecture theatre. Last night, however, the professor sat on a chair in front of the table. The lecture lasted for an hour and the large theatre was fairly well filled with students. After the lecture Professor Mr. Stokes spoke to Professor Shann.

### THE LATE PROFESSOR SHANN

From a photograph taken specially for "The Advertiser" only a few days ago.

Another student said that after the lecture the professor appeared to be in perfectly normal health, although it was true that he had asked the class if he might sit down to deliver his lecture. This lecture was the last that Professor Shann was to have given in that course for this term, which ends this week.

There are two windows in the committee room connected by a door with Professor Shann's office, on the north side. The window furthest from the door was found open, the bottom sash having been raised about two and a half feet. It was understood this open window that the professor was found with his head about 15 feet from the building. It was stated that the window in Professor Shann's office was not open. Although a class was proceeding in a nearby room at the time, nobody there heard any indication of the tragedy.

Last night few students learned of the tragedy. While investigations were proceeding at the spot where the professor was found, a class was in session in a room on the ground floor only a few feet away.

THE SCENE of the tragedy. The room occupied by the late Professor Shann at the University is indicated by the white cross at the side of the main building on North terrace. Professor Shann was found lying near the spot occupied by the motor car farthest from the camera.

### Broadcast For Assistant Lecturer

Special efforts were made by detectives during the evening to locate Mr. J. A. LaNauze, assistant lecturer in economics at the University. Messages were sent to St. Mark's College and other places, and finally a message was broadcast from a wireless station. Mr. LaNauze, the hind spent the evening with friends, called at the University shortly before midnight.

It was thought, as Mr. LaNauze had probably been in closest touch with Professor Shann during the day, and was believed to have been the last person other than Professor Shann to visit the latter's room, that he might have been able to throw some additional light on the tragedy. He could not do so, however, but told the authorities that during the day Professor Shann had seemed in normal health.

Later, Mr. LaNauze said he was too upset by the news of Professor Shann's death to discuss the matter further.

### PROFESSOR SHANN'S WORK

#### Twice Connected With Adelaide University

The tragic death of Professor Shann is a heavy loss to the intellectual life of South Australia; and, indeed, his scholarship was such that Australia as a whole could ill afford to lose a man so distinguished in the science of political economy. Although Professor Shann had only recently returned to South Australia, after a long absence in the other States, his circle of friends in Adelaide was extensive and growing. There was no more popular member of the professional staff of the Adelaide University, and not anyone prominently connected with the University in closer touch with outside interests, commercial and other. His fame, however, extended far beyond South Australia. He had lived and worked in almost every other State capital, and the high estimation in which his knowledge and judgment were held was attested by his being selected to attend the Imperial Conference at Ottawa as one of the advisers of the Commonwealth Government. He was also present afterwards at the World Economic Conference in London.

Professor Shann's Australian born, citizenship was not only a fact of this State extended over a number of years. His first professional appointment was to the University of Adelaide, and it is a testimony to the range of his scholarship that his first in Brisbane, and it was in a similar capacity that he was appointed to Adelaide last year.

Professor Shann was a singularly capable speaker, and a ready and amusing conversationalist, and was in constant demand as a lecturer and speaker.

#### Son Of Headmaster

Professor Shann was a son of Mr. Frank Shann, headmaster of Trinity Grammar School, Keswick, and was born in Hobart on April 30, 1864. Educated at Wesley College Melbourne, where his father was assistant master for time, and at Queen's College, Univer-

sity of Melbourne, he was the James scholar for 1901-2, and Wesleyan scholar in constitutional history and economics in 1904, in which year he took the degree of master of arts. He was for a year tutor at Queen's College, and in 1905 was appointed lecturer in constitutional history by the Melbourne University. A year later he came to Adelaide as acting professor of philosophy, but returned to Melbourne the next year to resume his former post.

There was a break of two years in his lectureship while he was engaged in research work at the London School of Economics. In 1910 he was offered the chair of political science in the Imperial University of Pekin, but declined the appointment, and instead took the position of lecturer in charge of history and economics at the University of Queensland, Brisbane, Queensland, Australia. In 1913, he accepted the professorship of history and economics at the University of Western Australia, where his work gained him recognition as one of the Commonwealth's foremost economists.

From 1921 onwards in Perth, he was the occupant of the chair of economics (as distinct from that of economics and history), and during this

#### University To Be Closed Today

An announcement that the University would be closed today and no lectures given, because of Professor Shann's death, was made last night by the Vice-Chancellor of the University (Sir William Mitchell). The term will end tomorrow.

period he was given leave to act as adviser to the Bank of New South Wales in Sydney, and to attend the Imperial Conference at Ottawa as representative of the Commonwealth and the World Economic Conference as the representative of the Bank of New South Wales.

With Professors Giblin, Copland, and Melville, Professor Shann was responsible for drawing up the scheme which, with few amendments, was adopted at the famous Premiers' Conference in 1931 and became known as the Premiers' Plan, on which Australia's financial and economic recovery has since been based.

In October last year, Professor Shann was appointed Professor of History and Economics at the University of Adelaide in succession to Professor Melville, who was retiring next year. Since Professor Melville had been appointed adviser to the Commonwealth Bank Board, in 1931. Since his arrival in Adelaide, Professor Shann had delivered several notable public addresses in his first, at a luncheon given by the Commonwealth Club in the Adelaide Town Hall, shortly after his arrival. He also made a plea for clearing the State's indebtedness, which he believed could be lightened without altering their effective powers. In discussing the future defence of the nation, he pointed out the necessity of thinking on the question of national defence, putting forth the view that the expenditure of spending millions of pounds on reconditioning railways, we should concentrate on the development of aviation. "I have a desperate feeling," he said, "that our leaders are stumbling along with their minds benumbed by habit. Yet I cannot think that Australians generally are unaware that the future defence and the future direction and enlightenment of this country will be done through the air. My only hope is that in an exhaustive address, dealing with the history of the financial relations of the Commonwealth and States,