

### MONEY FOR ANYTHING EXCEPT SCIENCE!

During the sessions of the Pan-Pacific Science Congress in Australia last year, much eloquence was expended on the subject of the value of scientific research and the application of the results to industry. In curious contrast to these eulogies of the scientist in relation to national progress, is the complaint of the Director of the Commonwealth Institute of Science and Industry as contained in the annual report to the House of Representatives this week, that the Institute at present is financially so limited as to be unable to carry out any considerable part of its statutory functions. So far from the interest and generosity of Government and Parliament having been stimulated by the deliberations of the Science Congress, Sir George Knibbs points out that there was actually a decrease of £1,000 in the sum provided for the Institute during the financial year of 1923-4, compared with the grant in the preceding period. Excluding £8,000 for special investigations, the net vote was less than £13,000; salaries and so on absorbed £6,000, "leaving less than £7,000 available for research into all the scientific and technical problems affecting the primary and secondary industries." With so limited a staff of experts and so small a grant, it is quite impossible, as the Director shows, to cover the whole of the prescribed field, even in the most superficial way; and urgent appeals to the Government for additional funds "have not been approved." Obviously, the Institute is starved. Sir David Masson drew attention to its plight in his presidential address to the Science Congress in Melbourne. He pointed out that the framework of an investigating bureau had been established, but that the Institute had not been given sufficient means to build laboratories or obtain skilled investigators. The Australian public, as he lamented, remains largely blind to its interests and its duties in connection with scientific research, and the indifference of the people is reflected in the apathy and parsimony of the Legislature.

If the Commonwealth carried into every branch of its activities the frugality which it exhibits towards the Science Bureau, the champions of that potentially invaluable institution might be less disposed to complain. But the reverse is the case. With its coffers overflowing, the Federation can find money in abundance for innumerable other projects much less likely to yield a rich return to the nation. The interest on the millions lost on shipping, war service homes, and other disastrous undertakings would have sufficed to maintain a scientific research department calculated to save Australia untold sums in checking natural pests and improving national efficiency. A Government which begrudges the Science Institute the means with which to carry on its work, is prepared to pay £7,000 annually in salaries alone to Commissioners to control the unproductive Capital Territory. The same session of Parliament which received the Science Director's report was marked by a bitter outburst from several members because the Public Works Committee was disinclined to recommend the construction of a railway to Canberra at a cost of £433,000—a line which would be chiefly for the convenience of Federal politicians. Legislators who increased their own salaries to £1,000 a year, and who are ready to lavish the taxpayers' money upon the appurtenances of government, display a surprising zeal for economy

when it comes to the financing of research. The Commonwealth should reconsider its whole attitude to the Institute which it created. It is worse than useless to establish a special organization, and detach a valuable official as Director, and then to withhold the funds necessary for the proper conduct of the work. The Director of a bureau capable of yielding immense benefits to Australia should not have to be a humble and unsuccessful supplicant for funds to the Government and Parliament.

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### UNIVERSITY EXTENSION LECTURES.

An attractive series of three courses of University Extension Lectures is announced in our advertising columns. The first course will be given by Professor Strong on "Great Writers of the Age of Shakespeare." His lectures will describe the spirit of Shakespeare's age and its social and political background. They will show that Elizabethan London, with a population only half that of Adelaide, contained at least 10 theatres, and a round dozen of playwrights, any one of whom would have been reckoned a notable figure in any nation's literature. Several of these dramatists—including Marlowe, Shakespeare, Webster, Ben Jonson, and Beaumont and Fletcher—will be discussed in detail. Elizabethan literature was far more closely connected with public thought and action than is the literature of our own day, and the lecturer will discuss the literature of warfare and the sea, with special reference to Hakluyt and Raleigh, and to the patriotic poems of Drayton and Daniel. Emphasis will be laid upon the pride of Elizabethan England in its historic past, which pride was largely responsible for the historical plays of Shakespeare and his contemporaries. The Elizabethan seamen and adventurers had their counterpart in the Elizabethan poets and writers of imaginative prose, who were, in fact, adventurers in the world of the spirit. Many of them, including Sidney, Chapman, and Daniel, had a passion for learning and for beauty, which passion transfigures much of their writing. The lecturer will show in what ways the poetry of Edmund Spenser and his followers expresses the spirit of the Renaissance. An account will be given of the Elizabethan sonneteers, and the Shakespearean and modern forms of the sonnet will be compared. Quotations will be given from the lyrics of the period, from Greene, Lyly, and Peele down to Heywood and Campion, and it will be shown how their work reflects the spirit of the age, and its lyric joy in life and beauty. Special reference will be made to Ben Jonson and the "Sons of Ben," including Herrick and Randolph. The lecturer will emphasize the remarkable range and variety of Elizabethan prose and the uncertainty of its power and inspiration. He will discuss Hooker and the religious prose of the period, Bacon and other essayists, Breton and various "character" writers, and the literature of roguery and vagabondage, with special reference to Greene and Dekker. The course will conclude with a retrospect of the whole period. The first lecture will be given on Tuesday, June 10, in the Prince of Wales Lecture Room at the University. Full particulars of the series on application at the registrar's office.

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### BUNDEY PRIZE FOR ENGLISH VERSE.

The Council of the University of Adelaide has awarded the Bunday Prize for English Verse to Mr. Adrian Joseph Korff. The examiners placed Miss Elsie Morriss proxime accessit. Mr. Korff is an undergraduate in law at the University, and Miss Morriss is an undergraduate in art.

## THE NEWS

SATURDAY, MAY 24, 1924.

### 'PETTIFOGGING POT-BOILING PROTECTIONISTS'

(By Harry Thomson.)

Recent remarks of Mr. Ramsay MacDonald to the effect that some of his political opponents who have dared to advocate Imperial preference are "pettifogging, pot-boiling protectionists" have one single merit—if it be a merit—that of alliteration. In every other respect they are highly regrettable. They are reducing to the level not merely of a party question, but of party abuse, what is infinitely the most important question confronting the British Empire today, and they reveal, too, an abysmal ignorance of British fiscal history in the last half-century. A very slight retrospect reveals this.

Trinidad, Barbados, British Guiana, St. Lucia, and other islands of the British West Indies are Crown Colonies. Their fiscal policy is directly decided by the Imperial Government. In 1909 a Royal Commission was appointed to consider trade relations between Canada and the West Indies; it was presided over by Lord Balfour of Burleigh. The report, adopted by the British Government, was in favor of a scheme of reciprocal trade preferences. In 1911 an agreement was in consequence arrived at between Canada and the West Indies. The features of this trade agreement were reciprocal trade preferences of about 20 per cent., and the provision for extra duties on a number of foreign imports.

This agreement was adopted by the British Government on behalf of the West Indies, and is a definite recognition of the principle of Empire preference. And only 13 years have elapsed.

So far as the Dominions themselves were concerned, however, there was a much wider extension of the principle. Before the war Canada granted preferential agreements to the United Kingdom, New Zealand, South Africa, India, Ceylon, and a number of Crown Colonies. Australia granted preference to the United Kingdom and to certain South African products. South Africa granted preference to Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom. . . . In face of all this and in face of the fact that the British Government has frequently instructed its own ambassadors to work with Dominion representatives in negotiating such treaties with foreign countries, it certainly seems very late in the day to characterise the preferential system as experimental and doomed to failure.

### Important Considerations

More important than the past, however, is the future. In matters of Empire, tendency is all important, and events only secondary. Two propositions can be put forth with absolute certainty. The first of these is that in the last 50 years there has been an emancipation by the Dominions from the fiscal and tariff control of Great Britain. It is not a great many years since the British Government even vetoed preferences between the different Australian Colonies. And the other proposition is that all the Dominions have definitely declared for protection and for using tariffs for far more than mere revenue purposes.

In Australia at least three other considerations hold sway—the fostering of industries, the payment of a living wage, and the direction of trade into particular channels, preferably Empire channels. These are facts and are strong political forces, and all the abuse and criticism in the world will not abate them. They are there to be used—or ignored. The British Empire cannot afford to ignore them if it is to remain the British Empire.

It is not often realised how rapidly and how effectively commercial treaties of the nature of reciprocal tariff concessions act. In 1860 Gladstone negotiated a commercial treaty with France. The French tariff on English goods was brought down to 15 per cent. The quinquennial period of 1865-9 showed an increase over the period 1855-9 of 175 per cent. in the imports from France and 130 per cent. in the exports to France. With other countries the average increase was only 67 per cent.

The preference extended by the United States to her tropical possessions acquired as a result of the Spanish-American War resulted in the whole of the United States' demand for sugar and other tropical products being satisfied by these possessions—to the great detriment and almost ruin of the British West Indies. This is another example.

### Self-preservation.

As with an individual so with a political community the first law is the law of self-preservation. That is even more true of a political community, for individuals have been known under stress of great emotion and when moved by high sentiment to sacrifice themselves for others. Political communities have Parliaments and press. There is discussion and argument and the counter-view. Self-interest comes in in a thousand ways. The life-blood of a modern community is trade and commerce. That must be nourished and preserved before all else. Whatever sacrifices a nation's representatives might as individuals be prepared to make, as representatives of the nation they cannot. Markets must be found, and if not in one place then in another. It is but self-preservation—a hard law but necessary. There is a place for sentiment, but it is not the first place. No one would wish to deery sentiment. All would wish to enthrone it. And that is why facts that hold in themselves the germ of danger should be faced.

At present the preference proposals have been dropped without even a vote. They have been dropped by a party. Canada is angry—and has said so—and already is looking toward the United States. Australia is disappointed, and Mr. Bruce says:—"We must have markets for our fruit and our wine. If not Great Britain—where?" And hard on that come tales of French overtures and of Italian meat contracts. In South Africa an election is pending, and the cry of the Secessionists is loud in the land—louder than for a great many years.

It is not the time for threats, which are foolish and futile. It is not the place for petulance. But it is the time for a very grave consideration of the whole problem of Empire relations in trade. Trade does not always follow the Flag. History, even of the last hundred years, shows that just as frequently does the Flag follow trade. For that among other reasons it is to be hoped that the question is brought rapidly out of the party slough into which it seems in Great Britain to have fallen, and put in the forefront of a sane Imperial policy.

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MR. JUSTICE ANGUS PARSONS.

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The Council of the University of Adelaide has appointed Mr. A. W. Bamton, A.I.A.S.A., to be the accountant of the institution. He has occupied similar position at the Adelaide School of Mines and Industries for the past 10 years.