

THE UNIVERSITIES' CONFERENCE.

Problems of Higher Education.

The scheme to found an examining University at Canberra was not approved by the majority of delegates to the Universities' Conference on Thursday. In a lecture delivered in the evening to the Graduates' Association Sir James Barrett sounded a note of warning with regard to malaria and tuberculosis in Australia.

There was a full attendance of delegates at the Universities' Conference, which was opened at the Adelaide University on Thursday. They were warmly welcomed by Sir George Murray, Chancellor of the Adelaide University, who was unanimously elected chairman of the conference. There was a full discussion concerning the proposal to establish an examining University at Canberra. Further consideration of the matter was deferred until further information could be made available.

Many delegates expressed the view that the proposed Canberra institution would almost certainly result in the setting up of a new University on the lines of those already established in the Commonwealth, where it was considered there was not sufficient room as yet for further extension in this direction.

At previous conferences certain proposals have been embodied in the resolutions which were carried and submitted to the Universities. With a view to find-



Sir George Murray.

ing out what has been done in these cases the matter will be discussed in conference, and a committee will be appointed to see that such essential business is brought before the governing bodies. With regard to the extension work of the Universities, it was pointed out that a great deal has been done in Queensland to reach the out-back students by means of correspondence. The prejudice against the granting of degrees to students under these conditions is mitigated to a great extent in that State because of the wide space between students and the conditions of living in the far northern areas. It was stated that, with the exception of the Melbourne University, where such work was undertaken merely to spread knowledge and without reference to degrees of correspondence, courses or lectures were not undertaken by the Universities, but much had been done in the way of extension lectures.

The conference expressed itself as being strongly opposed to the University of London examining for any degree in Australia save those of divinity.

The proposal by the Melbourne University to establish the new Ph.D. degree was not accepted. The degree would stand midway between that of master in certain courses and the higher doctorates. The degree was originated in England after the war, with a view to stopping the influx of English and American research students to German Universities. It was felt that the conditions here were not parallel, and the conference thereupon expressed itself against the proposal. At the afternoon adjournment the delegates were the guests of the University at afternoon tea.

COMBATING DISEASE.

WORK OF THE ROCKEFELLER FOUNDATION.

In the evening Dr. E. H. Davies presided at a meeting of the Graduates' Association in the Prince of Wales Theatre, at the University, when Sir James Barrett, of Melbourne, delivered an address on the significance of the Rockefeller Foundation.

In introducing the lecturer, Dr. Davies remarked that he believed their distinguished visitor could speak equally well

of medicine, town planning, music in Melbourne, or hospitals in Egypt. (Applause.)

Sir James Barrett is a fascinating speaker, and he held his audience spell-bound while he traced the development of the great Rockefeller Foundation, which he described as a milestone in the history of civilisation. All told, John D. Rockefeller had given away 110 million pounds sterling. Most of this had been devoted to education, and the money had been given step by step, thus ensuring the progress of the object for which it was donated. The main object of the Foundation was broadly stated as being "To promote the well-being of mankind throughout the world." To this end it set out to aid schools of medicine and public health. It gave demonstrations in co-operation with Government authority in the control of malaria in the southern states, of hookworm disease in America and abroad, including Australia, and in the eradication of yellow fever. It also entered into co-operation in country public health work, and supported fellowships for selected doctors, public health workers, and nurses. The Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial, which was devoted to the welfare of women and children was the American millionaire's Taj Mahal to the memory of his wife, and had cost £17,000,000. The death of a little grandson from infantile paralysis had led to the foundation of the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research, laboratories, and a hospital of 60 beds attached to it. Vast sums had been spent on public health hygiene, not only in America, but throughout Europe. The great medical school in Peking aimed at equipping a number of highly-qualified Chinese doctors not as medical practitioners, but as able lecturers and demonstrators in the Chinese universities. In addition to this great work 25 other medical centres in the country were supported by the Foundation. It was surprising to realise that 157 fellowships for all nationalities had been established throughout the world. The reorganisation of the University College in London was another colossal task.

Training in Midwifery.

There was nothing ephemeral about the work of the Foundation. For instance, their investigators had been quick to realise that the present nursing system, under which hospitals were largely staffed by probationers, was breaking down. In the days when Florence Nightingale revolutionized the conditions of nursing, hospitals and charities were seldom separated, so that the nurse who went to be trained was expected to do her share towards that charity, and the result was that hospitals were run cheaply. The extension of the training course over a period of four years or more had intensified this evil. It had also had another effect, for most of the women so trained were general nurses without experience in midwifery. In Victoria they had an average of 36,000 births yearly, and there was an annual supply of about 50 trained nurses to cope with this. To overcome the difficulty a special year's course of training in obstetrics had been instituted, but the value of such a midwife was not to be compared with that of a properly-trained nurse with experience in obstetrics. The Rockefeller Foundation report recommended a general training for nurses of some 28 months' duration. This, however, would necessitate the employment of a qualified staff by hospital authorities, for nurses would then train on the same principle as medical students. All grades of nursing were allowed for in the scheme, from the mere sickroom attendant to the highly-qualified operating theatre sister, whose worth all surgeons know. A degree of nursing had been arranged for in several of the Universities, and the 28 months' course of training was being tried at Yale University.

"Health for All the World."

It was significant of the wide scope of the Foundation that it left no stone unturned in its pursuit of the ideal of health for all the world, and in China a cholera outbreak had been stamped out by showing the natives exactly what was happening in regard to infection by means of an elaborate street pageant. Tuberculosis was an enemy of mankind against which the Foundation was directing its energies. In this connection he wished to sound a warning note with regard to Australia. If something more than mere politics were not considered with regard to housing and building generally, the inevitable result would be the breeding of consumptives. The tubercle germ could not live in dryness and sunlight, and if a heavy land tax, for instance, prevented them from keeping an adequate space about their houses so that the sunlight might have free access, they would provide conditions favorable for the germ.

In this regard it must be remembered that 80 per cent. of preventable disease could be stamped out by the public using their common sense, and their conscience once they had been educated on the subject. The history of malaria showed them that. Malaria had stopped Mark Antony as it had stopped Sennacherib and Coeur de Lion, and every other general in Asia Minor, until they came to General Alleghy, who had employed preventive measures with wonderful success.

So far malaria had been kept from coming farther south in Australia than somewhere about the centre of New South Wales, but it would not be very long before there was a stream of invalided people from the mandated territories returning to the Commonwealth, and then they would wish they had taken to heart the lesson of the great campaign against malaria undertaken by the Rockefeller Foundation in Doveton, where the disease had been reduced to a minimum. It was the same great institution which had wiped yellow fever from the face of the earth in all except three places—Brazil, Mexico, and Africa—but it was confidently hoped that these places would also be declared clean within the next decade. Nothing appeared too big or too small for its manifold activities, and the knowledge that crime was often largely due to the lack of organised play had led among other things to the establishment of a great park near New York in order to remedy this evil. That park had been visited by more than two million people in one year. The latest development of this phase of education was the Department of Recreation, which had been instituted in connection with the Chicago Department of Education.

If the children were remembered so too were the migrant birds of the great Continent, and a great sanctuary of 500 square miles of country had been provided for them in Louisiana. Mr. Rockefeller had accomplished for mankind more than any other man on earth. (Applause.)

Sir James was heartily thanked at the conclusion of his instructive address.

The Delegates.

The conference will be resumed this morning. The following is a list of the delegates:—

Sydney.—Sir T. W. Edgeworth David (chairman of Professorial Board), Sir Henry Barraclough (Dean of the Faculty of Engineering), E. R. Holme (Dean of the Faculty of Arts), and A. A. Lawson.

Melbourne.—Sir John MacFarland (Chancellor), Sir James Barrett, Dr. J. P. Wilson, Mr. M. P. Wilson; representing the staff—Professors W. E. Agar, E. Scott, and H. S. Summers.

Perth.—Professors N. T. M. Wilmore (vice-chancellor), A. D. Ross, and W. Whitfield, and Mr. E. de C. Clarke.

Brisbane.—Professors Priestley, Parnell, and Richards.

Hobart.—Representing the council—Professors R. L. Dunbabin and Alan Burn; representing the staff—Major L. F. Giblin, B.A. (chairman of the Faculty of Science), Professor D. P. Copland, and Mr. L. Rodway, C.M.G.

Adelaide.—Sir George Murray (chancellor), Dr. E. H. Davies, Sir Douglas Mawson, and Professors Darnley Naylor, Mitchell, Wilton, Kerr Grant, and Harvey Johnson. Mr. Stanley S. Addison (assistant registrar of the Melbourne University) is secretary of the conference.

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23 AUG 1924

PROFESSORS CONFER.

Oppose Canberra University.

New Ph.D. Degree Not Wanted

Representatives of the Australian universities who are in Adelaide in connection with science week discussed university matters at the Adelaide University on Thursday afternoon. The delegates are opposed to a new university at Canberra, holding it is not required. They also contend that a new degree of Ph.D. is not warranted.

The object of the conference, which was the third of its kind, is to discuss questions of common interest and relationship between the various universities. The experience of the older universities is also placed at the disposal of the younger institutions in that manner. The majority of the delegates are in Adelaide this week in preparation for the science congress, which will commence next Monday, and advantage was taken of that fact to hold this year's meeting in this city. The delegates met in the council room at the University on Thursday afternoon, when Sir George Murray (Chancellor of

the Adelaide University) was elected to the chair. Mr. Stanley Addison, of the Melbourne University, is the secretary of the conference. The delegates were:—

Sydney.—Sir T. W. Edgeworth David, B.A., D.Sc. (Chairman of Professorial Board), Sir Henry Barraclough, B.E. (Dean of the Faculty of Engineering), Messrs. E. R. Holme, O.B.E., M.A. (Dean of the Faculty of Arts), and A. A. Lawson, D.Sc.

Melbourne.—Sir John MacFarland (Chancellor), Sir James Barrett, Dr. J. P. Wilson, Mr. M. P. Wilson; representing the staff—Professors W. E. Agar, E. Scott, and H. S. Summers.

Perth.—Professors N. T. M. Wilmore (Vice-Chancellor), A. D. Ross, and W. Whitfield, and Mr. E. de C. Clarke.

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Hobart.—Representing the council, Professors R. L. Dunbabin and Alan Burn; representing the staff, Major L. F. Giblin, B.A. (Chairman of the Faculty of Science), Professor D. P. Copland, B.A., and Mr. L. Rodway, C.M.G.

Adelaide.—Sir George Murray, Professor Mitchell (Vice-Chancellor), Professors Kerr Grant, Darnley Naylor, Harold Davies, Harvey Johnstone, Sir Douglas Mawson, J. R. Wilton, McKellar Stewart, and W. Rennie.

University at Canberra.

A discussion took place on the proposed Canberra Examining University, and a final decision was postponed pending the receipt of special information from the Sydney University. The general opinion among the delegates seemed to be against the proposal, on the grounds that it would ultimately mean the setting up of another teaching university, which was not warranted by the present circumstances in Australia.

Carrying Out Resolutions.

At previous university conferences, resolutions have been carried and were subsequently submitted to the various universities. This year the conference has decided to find out how the universities have acted upon those resolutions, and it is proposed to set up during the progress of the present conference, a committee composed of a representative of each university to see if the essential parts of the business done at the conference were brought adequately before the governing bodies of the different universities, with the object of seeing that the resolutions were carried into effect.

Extension Lectures.

Another question that came under discussion was that of extension lectures and teaching by correspondence. A great deal of work is done in those directions by the Melbourne University. No degree follows the course, but it is carried on for the sake of general knowledge. The Queensland University does on a certain amount of that kind of work and appends a degree to it. The other universities do little beyond conducting extension lectures for a non-degree purpose. No decision was reached on the matter, which will be again before the conference at a later date.

London University Degrees.

The conference was strongly against the University of London conducting examinations for degrees in Australia. They exempted from their resolution the degree relating to divinity examinations.

New Degree of Ph.D.

The Melbourne University brought forward the matter of the creating of a new degree of Ph.D. It was proposed that it should be intermediate between certain courses and the higher doctorates such as Litt.D. and D.Sc. The proposal was for the degree to follow on the lines of that of Ph.D. in the English universities, who instituted it after the war as a research degree in order to divert the streams of research students, which used to go to Germany. The degree set up a research system admitting of a high class of work. The members felt that there was no parallel in the conditions of London and Australia, and decided that the degree was not warranted.

The conference will continue its deliberations to-day.

Advertiser

23.8.24

Professor Sir T. W. Edgeworth David, Professor of Geology at Sydney University, arrived in Adelaide yesterday morning to attend the sessions of the Science Congress, which open in Adelaide next week. It is some years since the Professor has been in South Australia, and on the last occasion he was associated with Captain White in an expedition into the interior. He expects that good work will be done in the geological section this meeting. One of the most interesting features, he thinks, would be the paper by Mr. L. Keith Ward, which will be a report on his recent tour of Central Australia. Sir Edgeworth will make a report to the research committee on glacial phenomena in Australia, and will deal with the crumpling of the earth's surface, faults, volcanic zones, and the correlation of the coal fields of the Commonwealth. During his stay in Adelaide Sir Edgeworth David will be the guest of Sir Douglas Mawson.