

SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH.

WESTERN AUSTRALIAN FIELD.

PERTH, September 11.

Western Australia is receiving much attention as a field for scientific research. A Cambridge ethnological expedition, of which Mr. Alfred Brown is the leader, is now about to leave for the interior, and a Swedish expedition, which is to spend 18 months in the north-west, has arrived at Fremantle in the Swedish-Australian liner Hellenic. Dr. Eric Mjoberg, a scientist of Sweden, who is leading the Swedish expedition, has conducted researches in zoology in various parts of the world. He is accompanied by Mr. Rudolf Soderberg, B.A., and Mr. Y. Laurell (Secretary of the Royal Swedish Museum of Natural History), and five other experts upon researches. Their visit will extend over 18 months, and will cost £1,100, provided by the Stockholm Academy of Sciences and private subscriptions in Sweden. It is intended to make a large collection of objects of natural history, including animals and fossils, and efforts will be made to see how far and to what extent immigration has occurred from the Malay Islands, and its influence on flora and fauna. Two excursions will be made, the first from Derby up the Fitzroy River to the Leopold Ranges, and the second from Derby along the coast to the northern-most point in the Kimberley district. Special attention will be devoted to animal life in the bays along the coast, and to obtaining additional important results to those of the German Michaelson and Hartley expeditions from a marine point of view. Dr. Mjoberg states the assistance of Federal and Western Australian Governments has been promised to the expedition.

Mr. Brown explained that his proposed travels into the interior have a double object. He was interested mainly in aborigines, but Mr. Grant Watson, who was accompanying him, would study the fauna of the country. Mr. Brown has not yet mapped out his itinerary. "Australian aborigines," he said, "are attracting more attention in the scientific world than the aborigines of any other country, as they represent a peculiar phase of society or social organization, in that they personify in certain features a stage in past history of man everywhere. Western Australia has been chosen for research because the aborigines are rapidly dying out. A controversy has been caused with regard to Totemism, a peculiar form of social organization and religion which exists in Australasia in one of its forms, and is also found in North America, Africa, India, Melanesia, and New Guinea. It is the most primitive form of civilization known, and my expedition will test some of the theories put forward."

he shortly proposed to introduce. We lagged in this respect behind the other States, and in saying so he spoke of technical schools generally, and cast no reflection on that splendid establishment on North-terrace, the School of Mines. He would later propose that the branch schools of mines in the country should be placed in charge of the Department of Education. Classes in the University should never be too large, as this entailed a loss of efficiency, and, therefore, a sufficient teaching staff was necessary. Abolition of fees would doubtless result in a large increase of students, and the University could only admit students who had reached a fitting stage. He feared Mr. Coombe's amendment was so large in its scope that it would overshadow and overweight the original motion, and therefore he would ask the House not to agree to it. He recognised that the Gawler School of Mines had done excellent work, but the proposals which had been made would entail great expense, and the monetary aspect must be studied. The expenditure ultimately involved in a reconstitution of the University could only be imagined, and the work, if once undertaken, must be continued. He supported the motion and trusted that good would result from it. The questions touched on in the amendment could be considered in the Education Bill, which it was intended to introduce. He appreciated the importance of education, and realised that the work of the schoolmaster was to produce, as Milton said, "good fathers, good mothers, good husbands, and good wives, good patriots, and good citizens." The great aim in education work was to give the scholars the power of using their brains, not merely to enable them to memorise dates and details. If a boy could not succeed in mathematics and science, there was no reason why he should not be more successful at practical and technical schools. He felt sure good would result if the motion were carried. There was a great field open before the University, and with its extension into the country the possibilities of its success and usefulness appeared enormous. The expenditure of a vast amount of money would be involved but it would be warranted.

Mr. YOUNG thought education was a matter of national importance, and the higher the education the more effective were the citizens. But it would be an unwise thing to attempt to dump the University on the working classes. Rather, the cry for education should come from those classes. A great many people were not looking for education, and hence the matter was not of such wide importance as was believed by some people. The establishment of universities, under the charge of a number of professors, with low fees or no fees at all, was not likely to bring about the universal education they all desired to see. Before the University could be made available the paths to its door should be made more easily traversable. Mr. Coombe's amendment was submitted with that object in view, and should be adopted, for otherwise the Select Committee would be considering the top rung of the ladder only and no provision would be made for such an eventuality as a rotten rung lower down. Some people were more adept to take a high position as skilled workmen than to pass into one of the professions, and in order to educate the faculties of those people to the best advantage technical education should be fostered. Secondary education would gauge the mental capacity of the scholars, and by means of a well founded system of scholarships the Government could help those deserving of promotion on to the University. At present the sons of rich people had a distinct advantage over the children of the poorer classes, but when the Government had control of secondary schools all would be put on the same footing. The students who were promoted through scholarships would be well received at the University, for there were no class distinctions in South Australia. (Hear, hear.) At the Scottish universities many of the students had to go through much self-denial before they could graduate, and to make the path absolutely smooth did not mean that education would turn out the best men and women for the work of the world. The years between 14 and 21 were some of the most important as regards education, and for that purpose our principal requirement was technical and secondary schools, rather than the University. He would therefore support the amendment. It was no use setting up a university which would educate the whole people. (Hear, hear.) If the number of scholars at the University was to be materially increased the building and the grounds must be enlarged.

Mr. DENNY—All other universities have colleges within their grounds, and it should be so here.

Mr. YOUNG—It was very difficult to say whether the University should be enlarged where it stands, or should be carried right out into the suburbs. If the latter course was adopted it would interfere with the present non-residential system and the course of lectures. The present system enabled the law students to serve their articles and attend their lectures, and also suited those who attend night lectures. The 50,000 acres originally granted to the University were assessed by the Government for taxation purposes at £50,000 unimproved value, and yet when the University authorities desired to sell them the Government only offered £35,000 for them unimproved. (Laughter.) Finally the University got £40,000 from the Government for the land, which gave them an income at 3½ per cent. of £1,500, whereas they only received £900 as revenue from their lands, which were mostly in the dry north. As proof of the progressive character of the administration of the University he would mention that it was the first University to give degrees to women; it devoted £25,000 money left to it by private donors towards enabling the State to give a better education to State school teachers; it maintained 33 permanent centres in country towns where candidates might present themselves for examination free of fees; it was the first University to provide a commercial course, and it entered into an agreement with the School of Mines for combining their teaching to some extent. The University had not been exclusive, but had joined hands with other classes of the community in order to promote higher education.

Mr. SENIOR—What chance would I have?

Mr. YOUNG—The hon. member would doubtless be offered the chair of logic, as soon as it was established, and he would have the warm recommendation of all hon. members who desire his absence here. (Laughter.)

On the motion of Mr. PEAKE, the debate was adjourned until October 23.

THE ADELAIDE UNIVERSITY.

Adjourned debate on the motion of Mr. Ryan—"That a Select Committee be appointed to report on the best methods to be adopted to make available the facilities for higher education at the Adelaide University to deserving students." To which Mr. Coombe has moved the following amendment, viz.:—"To add to the question the words 'and also to report on the desirability of providing better facilities for secondary and technical instruction.'"

Mr. CONEYBEER recognised that there was a strong desire to strengthen and improve every phase of their educational system, from the kindergarten to the University, and the Government was anxious to comply with that desire as far as possible. Many promising boys and girls had been prevented from reaching the desired goal of higher education by poverty. The teaching of the University should be as high and as deep as the human mind can reach; it should cover the whole field of human knowledge. (Hear, hear.) For that we must have a competent staff, and there should be evening lectures for those who cannot attend classes during the day-time. He felt pride and pleasure in remembering that many of our professors had been willing to take part in extension lectures during the vacations. The University should have the means each year of buying every good book, for an enormous collection was required. Progress depended on a long series of patient, often unrewarded, experiments conducted by enthusiastic students of science. The cost of education was a serious burden on the State, but a crying need here was the extension of technical education. The policy of the Government with regard to high schools and technical colleges would be embodied in a Bill which

—Staff Concert at the Conservatorium.—

A fair audience assembled at the Elder Hall on Monday evening to hear a concert by the staff—Mr. Heinecke, Mr. Bryceson Treharne, and Mr. Harold Parsons—assisted by Miss C. Gmeiner (viola) and Miss S. Whittington (second violin). It was a well-educated audience, which did not obtrude applause between the movements of the three long pieces, and appreciated to the full the scholarly and musicianly treatment of the two quintets by Cesar Franck and Christian Sinding, and the quartet by Schumann. The Franck quintet showed a fine ensemble, and gave scope for much clever handling. The composition abounds in broad passages, bell-like insistent notes, and well-worked climaxes, though it is somewhat elaborate for a first hearing. The Schumann quartet was thoroughly characteristic, and was played with the delicacy suited to the German master's music. The Sinding quintet was the most interesting number of the evening. It is in the composer's happiest mood, full of graceful melodies and brilliant harmonies, but coming at the end of a rather difficult programme, it was hardly appreciated to the full. Miss Cheek was the vocalist, and successfully gave a great scena from Verdi's "Aida," which would tax the powers of any artist. The exquisite invocation with which the song concluded was given with excellent taste. Her other selection showed the fluency of Miss Cheek's voice. Scarlatti's "Le Violette" and Purcell's "Nymphs Shepherds" are redolent of the seventeenth century, and full of grace notes and brilliant trills.