

Advertiser, July 19<sup>th</sup>, 1910.

## BRITISH SCIENCE GUILD.

### SOUTH AUSTRALIAN BRANCH INAUGURATED.

There was a large gathering in the lecture-hall at the Institute Building, North-terrace, on Monday evening, when a South Australian branch of the British Science Guild was inaugurated.

Mr. J. W. H. Hullett, who has acted as organising secretary of the movement, expressed thanks to his Excellency the Governor, Sir Samuel Way (Chancellor of the University), Mr. A. B. Moncrieff (Railways Commissioner), Mr. T. Gill (Under Treasurer), and Mr. J. W. Jones (secretary to the Public Works Department), for their assistance in connection with the project.

On the motion of Mr. Moncrieff, seconded by Mr. W. Gill (Conservator of Forests), Sir Samuel Way was unanimously appointed chairman.

Sir Samuel, in taking the chair, cordially thanked the audience for the honor conferred upon him. He was very sympathetic towards the objects of the guild, and was glad that a local branch was on the eve of organisation. He congratulated the founder of the branch (Mr. A. B. Moncrieff) upon the fact that the inspiration which he received in Queensland a few months ago was happily realised. He also complimented Mr. Hullett upon the zeal and success with which he had carried out the preliminary organising work. They required as their president a man distinguished in science, a practical man, and one who had the confidence of the scientists of the State and of the whole community. The president should also be a man of force and character, and of patriotic ardor. There was one gentleman among them who possessed those qualities, and he felt sure the audience would anticipate him when he said that man was Professor Stirling. (Applause.) He had the utmost pleasure in proposing Professor Stirling as president of the branch.

The Premier (Hon. J. Verran), in seconding the motion, said they were living in an age when the world was full of new ideas, and he welcomed the advent of the organisation as a step in the right direction. There was generally a rush at the commencement, but what they required was stability and permanence. He was extremely pleased that they had in South Australia a man of Professor Stirling's type. That gentleman had not concealed his knowledge, but had always been willing out of the abundance of his intellect and the goodness of his heart to give his services for the benefit of his country. (Applause.) That could not have been done without self-sacrifice, which Professor Stirling had cheerfully made. The professor was not a man whom the position filled, but would be one who filled the position, and he hoped he would long be spared to adorn the office of president. (Applause.)

The Rev. Dr. Bevan supported the motion, and added his testimony to the worth of Professor Stirling, whose name, he said, was known far beyond the limits of the State, for he was widely recognised for the high service he had rendered to the sciences to which he had devoted himself. (Applause.)

The motion was carried by acclamation.

On the motion of Dr. J. C. Verco, seconded by Mr. A. Buchanan, the following vice-presidents were elected:—The Premier, Minister of Education, Chancellor of the University, president of the School of Mines and Industries, president of the board of governors of the Public Library, president of the Royal Society, president of the South Australian branch of the Geographical Society, the Railways Commissioner, Commissioner of Insolvency, Surveyor-General, Director of Education, Conservator of Forests, president of the Zoological Society. It was pointed out that that list included representatives of many institutions that stood for knowledge in various branches and work in a number of departments. The other officers elected were:—General committee officers, Professors Chapman, Mitchell, and Rennie, Drs. D. Mawson, W. T. Cooke, and R. H. Palleine, Messrs. E. J. Bradley, E. V. Clark, J. Dalby, S. Dixon, G. F. Dodwell, H. W. Gartrell, T. Gill, A. J. Higgins, M. W. Holtze, W. Howchin, W. B. Poole, F. B. Rushton, W. Rutt, and Graham Stewart; treasurer, Mr. B. S. Roach; assistant treasurer, Dr. A. H. Schulz; secretary, Mr. J. W. H. Hullett; assistant secretary, Mr. A. W. Dunstone. On the motion of Professor Stirling, seconded by Mr. A. B. Moncrieff, it was decided to ask his Excellency the Governor to be patron of the society.

### The Inaugural Address.

Professor Stirling, who presided over the inaugural gathering, requested his Excellency the Governor to open the branch and to accept the office of patron.

His Excellency said he highly appreciated the honor which he had received at the hands of the branch. Although the contribution of the British Empire to the progress of science had been second to no other nation, the English people had not manifested, from an industrial point of view, that interest in science which was so noticeable among the people of the Continents of Europe and America. The object of the British Science Guild was to bring together all those who throughout the Empire were interested in science and scientific methods in order by joint action—(1) to convince people of the necessity of applying methods and teachings of science to all branches of human endeavor, and thus further the progress and increase the welfare of the Empire; (2) to bring before the Government the scientific aspects of all matters affecting the national welfare; (3) to promote and extend the application of scientific principles to industrial and general purposes; and (4) to promote scientific education by encouraging the support of universities and other institutions where the bounds of science were extended and new applications of scientific methods were devised. The Science Guild, although in sympathy with other societies, was not identical with any other. Its purpose was to stimulate the appreciation of value of scientific knowledge and advantages of employing methods of scientific enquiry and the study of cause and effect in affairs of every kind. Such methods were not less applicable to the problems which confronted the statesman, the official, the merchant, the manufacturer, and the schoolmaster, than to those of the chemist or biologist; and the value of a scientific education lay in the power which it gave to grasp and apply the principles of investigation employed in the laboratory to the problems which modern life presents in peace or war. Let them take the problem of Japan. The Western world was wondering at the efficiency of both the navy and the army of Japan. What had really happened there was that for the last 30 years everybody, from the Emperor to the smallest boy and girl, had been taught to think. They had been dealing with things as well as words in their schools, and as a result they represented at the present moment the maximum of efficiency and brain-power. Then there was the great relative advance of the commerce and industry of Germany and the United States. Those were examples of countries having complete and numerous State-aided universities, and their national activities were carried on in the full light of modern science by men who had received a complete training. If the guild helped Australians to improve their own position in this respect it would not have been founded in vain. No one believed for a moment that science was able to create faith or charity, but the scientific study of economic conditions was capable of putting into the hands of the charitable the proper method of dealing with the poor and needy. After the Franco-Prussian war an eminent Frenchman said, "We have been defeated by the educated brain and the scientific method of those who contended against us." It was not the victory of arms alone, but the victory of brain brought to bear upon the field of war. It was not the managers, employers, or capitalists only who must be trained, but the workers also. There were museums in Holland and Germany to show in working models every appliance devised by scientific men for the protection of life and limb in every industry, for the promotion of health, and for preventing accidents and the danger to health from noxious vapors and accumulated dust. People were also shown there the best method for feeding children and how to build a house economically, and the farmer and manufacturer could go and get scientific advice of the best character. The British Science Guild was founded on an awakening of the national consciousness by the strain of foreign competition, which pressed so heavily upon them in every walk of life and every market. Their competitors had derived exceptional strength from the superior development of their technical and educational system. The guild was supported by the most eminent men in every branch of life throughout the Empire. The great lesson which the nations of the British Empire had to learn appeared to be to recognise that mind dominated matter, and that no progress could be made without the faculty of organisation. As Japan gained the victory over Russia by applying science to war, so they required to gain their economic victory by applying science to industry. No industrial community could in these days retain its place unless it had the highest science at its disposal. That guild was a federated body and a patriotic institution, and branches of it were to be established throughout the

### Presidential Address.

Professor Stirling said he deeply appreciated the honor conferred upon him, and he would do his best to deserve it. He acknowledged that there were others to whom the position of president might have more fitly fallen, and with more advantage to the guild. His only justification for the appointment was that he yielded to none in his appreciation of all the organization would represent and advocate. The British Science Guild was formed in London in 1905; a branch already existed in New South Wales, and similar branches were being formed in Queensland, Victoria, and Canada. It would scarcely be contested that in those days the rivalry between the nations was, in the main, a struggle for industrial supremacy. For many years the British race held in that respect an undisputed lead, but of late years they had seen the rise of formidable rivals in such nations as the Americans, the Germans, and quite recently in an Oriental race whose existence as a great nation was unheard of half a century ago. The main, and for the most part the true, explanation of the astonishing rise of their rivals lay in the better appreciation and the more extended application to human efforts of scientific principles and methods. One was unfortunately compelled to make that derogatory statement in spite of the fact that, so far as actual discovery or the efficiency of the human machine was concerned, the English race was second to none. Where it had often failed was in regard to the recognition of the importance and potentiality of a discovery, and in the apathy or want of appreciation which had allowed the opportunities of application and extension to be neglected. Thus it had been left to others to reap the tangible advantage that had subsequently accrued. Such was the case in regard to the discovery of the aniline dyes by an Englishman, and the national failure to see its industrial bearings, so that practically the whole of that immense chemical industry with its innumerable offsets had gone to Germany. There was much truth in a remark made by a University colleague in a neighboring State that the organic chemists of Germany were more to be feared than its Dreadnoughts. The change that was necessary was not so much a specific recognition of the advantage of this or that particular scientific method, as an entire revolution in the mental attitude of their rulers and people towards science. (Applause.) They had to recognise that success in every human pursuit depended first and chiefly upon science and scientific methods. In all the problems that faced the politician, the social reformer, and the individual—in all those directions and more—the first essential of success was the adoption of scientific methods and organization on scientific principles. Unfortunately it was still necessary to meet the too general belief that science was a something which stood apart from other kinds of knowledge. As a matter of fact science was nothing more or less than organized commonsense. (Applause.)

The Premier, in moving a vote of thanks to the Governor for his excellent address, said that was the first time he had ever attended a society such as this, and he was almost beginning to think he now had some legal standing in the matter of science. (Laughter.)

The Minister of Education (Hon. F. W. Conybeer), in seconding the motion, said he felt the institution launched that night had a great future before it. He fully realised the remarks of the speakers when they urged that greater support should be given to technical education. Greater sums must be expended in such education in order that every boy and girl should not be deprived of the chance of developing his or her powers to the utmost in the interests of the State. If they were not careful other nations would be leaving them behind. (Applause.)

On the motion of Mr. B. F. Rushton, seconded by Professor Rennie, the president was thanked for his able address.

The Treasurer (Hon. C. Vaughan) and the Chief Secretary (Hon. F. S. Wallis) were among those present.