

TROPICAL RESEARCH.

During recent years medical opinion has been substantially revised on the question of the possibility of tropical colonisation by Europeans. The Commonwealth is vitally interested in the subject. The White Australia policy to which we are committed makes it imperative that every reasonable effort should be put forth to secure conditions in the northern portions of this continent which will conduce to European settlement. Not so very long ago the idea of an extensive white population in the Northern Territory or the higher latitudes of Queensland would scarcely have been entertained. "White men can live, but they cannot work in these zones" was the generally accepted theory. But latterly new knowledge has been gleaned on a number of questions relating to areas in different parts of the world which had previously been regarded as "the white man's grave," and it is now admitted amongst persons competent to form a trustworthy opinion that factors other than latitude and heat have much to do with the unhealthy conditions of many a tropical country. In a suggestive article contributed to the Melbourne "Argus," Professor Osborne pleads for investigation respecting the influence of the tropics, and he criticises some of the dogmatic statements to be found in text books dealing with the subject. For instance, a volume of late date is quoted as stating that in the tropics "there is a deficiency in the number of red corpuscles in the blood in consequence of the diminished proportion of oxygen in the air," and that "the blood becomes more diluted, as evaporation from the lungs is slight." The first of these generalisations the professor characterises as "untrue" and the second as "sneer nonsense." The matter is important as illustrating the persistence with which erroneous views are circulated. If physical degeneration were the inevitable consequence of residence in torrid climates, and the ravages of the dire maladies which the popular imagination has associated with high temperatures were incapable of being checked, a very considerable portion of this continent would remain useless to the Anglo-Saxon race, despite its wonderful fertility and its ample resources.

Professor Osborne admits, as, indeed, everyone at all conversant with the subject must, that the tropics in their present condition are hostile to the white race, and "that they must be attacked with all the resources of modern knowledge." Happily this knowledge is rapidly increasing, thanks to such useful institutions as the Schools of Tropical Medicine in connection with the Universities of London and Liverpool, and the splendid institution founded at Manila by the American Government, and equipped with all the latest and most approved apparatus. The triumphs which are possible to hygienic science find impressive expression at Panama. Nothing succeeds like success, and the convincing proof American authorities are able to place before the world of the victory which scientific treatment has achieved will act as a stimulus to completer study and more determined effort with the object of converting the hitherto hostile zones to conditions under which the white man can find scope for his energies and remuneration for his labors. Australia is as yet a young country, and a heavy task has always confronted her settlers. There is no reason for surprise or fault-finding if but little has been done in the way of research as to the

relation of climate to disease in the northern parts of the continent. The time has, however, arrived when, in the interests of defence as well as development, a determined effort must be made to settle the lands in these latitudes. Largely as the result of the untiring energy of Dr. Frodham, Bishop of North Queensland, something is being done in the direction of the study of tropical medicine at Townsville, and there is little doubt that this institute will develop into a centre of practical investigation which will be of great utility to Australia.

Professor Osborne regards it as a matter of great importance that we should have wet-bulb thermometer registers for tropical areas, and he asserts that "all progress in

the physiological study of tropical acclimatisation must remain suspended until they are supplied." While acknowledging that there may be tracts where the white man could live but could not work, he reminds us that "there are unquestionably many tropical regions which when cleared of disease by the protozoologist and hygienist would offer healthy homes and the opportunity of strenuous and profitable work." The field for enquiry is a wide one. Suitability of different diets, the use of alcohol, and physiological conditions generally, together with questions of sanitation and hygiene, dress and habitations, are among the things in respect to which research would be of great value. "Not until a tropical region has been rendered mosquito-free, and free to a great extent from the preventable diseases, and not until certain physiological investigations have been conducted on the white man living in the tropics," says Professor Osborne, "can any dogmatic statement be made as to the possibility or impossibility of tropical colonisation." There are few countries in which investigation of these matters would be of more utility than they would be in the Commonwealth. Dr. Ramsay Smith some time ago pointed out in his report on "Endemic and epidemic diseases in the Philippine and adjacent islands" that Governments were beginning to recognise the value of science, and he mentioned that without quinine the French had admitted they could not have conquered Morocco, and that "the Panama Canal was impossible while the mosquito had an unrestricted field of operation." He also referred to the success of the war waged against malaria in the United States and elsewhere as "one of the greatest triumphs of modern medicine." That useful work could be done by systematic tropical research, with a view to the proper development of Northern Australia, is certain, and any money wisely expended in such an enterprise would be likely to prove a profitable investment.

CRESWELL MEMORIAL.

CHAIR OF COMMERCE
SUGGESTED.

A meeting of about 30 representative citizens was held on Tuesday afternoon to consider the best means of perpetuating the memory of the late Mr. John Creswell, who for many years was secretary of the Royal Agricultural and Horticultural Society and the Adelaide Chamber of Commerce.

Sir Edwin Smith, who presided, said those present had been invited by circular. At the previous gathering, which was of an informal character, no agreement had been arrived at in reference to what should be done. Suggestions had been made for a memorial pavilion or new scoring board at the Adelaide Oval, a pavilion at the new University Recreation Ground, and for something in connection with St. Peter's College. Personally, he had concluded the best plan would be a John Creswell Scholarship in connection with the Faculty of Commerce at the Adelaide University. The St. Peter's College proposition opened a door for a memorial at the institution, where their late friend had been educated; but that scheme would narrow down the benefit against outside competition. He believed, too, the collegians themselves intended to do something there, so that that might be left to them. As President of the Cricket Association and identified with the sports on the Adelaide Oval, he for one would disagree with the idea of that body, as one of the originators of the memorial project, seeking to erect a pavilion, and, as the ground was leasehold, such a building might not be allowed to remain after the lease was run out. The idea of the commercial scholarship had been met at the previous meeting by equal voting for and against, some who attended objecting that Mr. Creswell had identified himself with sport and not with commerce. The fact that their late friend had been secretary of the Chamber of Commerce, of the Royal Agricultural and Horticultural Society, and of the Queen's Home, as well as actively associated with the musical work at the University, was sufficient to show his interest in education as well as in sport. A University scholarship would have a thousand advantages over any transient memorial. (Hear, hear.) It would last as long as the University itself. Mr. Creswell had left a son, and what greater pleasure could that boy have than to aspire to win a scholarship founded in the name of his father, as one of the Stow family had gained a Stow Scholarship. (Hear, hear.) Whatever amount was subscribed would be handed over to the University with the assurance that the name of John Creswell would be perpetuated, even though the full amount required were not subscribed at once.

Mr. S. J. Jacobs (a member of the University Faculty of Commerce) suggested a chair of lectureship in preference to a scholarship. The commerce students were supporting themselves in business, and as the fees were small a scholarship would be insignificant, and was not required. There was, however, great need of a lecturer in connection with the diploma. At present outside gentlemen had to be obtained to deliver the lectures, and were paid nominal fees for their services.

Mr. A. S. Cheadle (President of the Chamber of Commerce) moved—"That this meeting form itself into a committee to create a University Chair in connection with the Faculty of Commerce, to perpetuate the memory of the late Mr. John Creswell."

Col. Rowell, C.B. (President of the Royal Agricultural and Horticultural Society) seconded the motion. No doubt each body with which Mr. Creswell had been connected would also do something independently. He had no doubt the Royal Agricultural Society would have a Creswell trophy or some such memorial at its next show.

Mr. S. J. Jacobs informed Mr. B. V. Servinour that a lectureship of £100 to £150 a year could be established. He had many calls for his services from all the head of all local entertainments, and the known reciter. For many years he was at the dramatic power, and was a well-versed in singing. He had also considered cello, and instructed many pupils in knowledge of music, and played the violin had a splendid musical voice, a sound he had laid out, and also to reading. He had devoted his time to a garden which he had a private residence adjoining.