24 REG. 30-3-27

AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH.

Important Melbourne Conference.

The Council for Scientific and Industrial Research has recently given much attention to the question of initiating research work on matters of problems affecting the agricultural industries of the Commonwealth. It was clear that in this field of work, close cooperation and co-ordination is necessary, if overlapping and waste of effort on the part of the various organisations and to be avoided. For this purpose, the Council convened a conference of representatives of the State Departments of Agriculture, the universities, and other interests concerned, to discuss the lines which the Commonwealth can most effectively fill in a scheme of national activity in this direction. The conference was held at Melbourne on March 23 and 24. The members were unanimous in the opinion that there is a real need for Commonwealth participation in agricultural research, and they indicated that they would welcome such participation most cordially. The conference gave the council advice which will be of the greatest value to it in shaping the future course. One matter of special interest discussed by the conference was the question of establishing a Bureau of Agricultural Research, institute in Australia.

The following were present:—Mr. G. A. Julius (Chairman of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research), New South Wales—Mr. G. Ross (Under Secretary, Department of Agriculture), Dr. Darnell-Smith (Biologist, Department of Agriculture), and Acting Professor R. L. Waterhouse (University of Sydney). Victoria—Dr. E. S. J. Thomson (Director of Agriculture), Mr. H. A. Mullett (Superintendent of Agriculture), and Professor A. E. Wood (University of Melbourne). Queensland—Messrs. A. E. Graham (Under Secretary Department of Agriculture and Stock), H. C. Easterby (Director of Bureau of Sugar Experiment Stations), and Professor E. J. Goddard (University of Queensland). South Australia—Mr. J. Perkins (Director of Agriculture), Mr. W. J. Spafford (Chief Agricultural Instructor), Professor D. A. S. Carnegie (Waite Agricultural Research Institute). Western Australia—Mr. C. L. Sutton (Director of Agriculture), and Professor J. W. L. Paterson (University of Western Australia). Tasmania—Messrs. F. E. Ward (Director of Agriculture), and Gilbert Gibson (Director of Agriculture). Council for Scientific and Industrial Research.—Professor A. C. D. Rivett, M.A., D.Sc., F.A.A., (Lightfoot, and the secretary (Mr. G. A. Cook).

Interesting Resolutions.

Delegates passed the following resolutions:—1. This conference is of the opinion that it is desirable that the main elements of the problems confronting the agricultural and live stock industries of Australia, should be investigated by a special agricultural research is desirable. 2. The field for the investigation of agricultural problems is almost unlimited in scope. In this field there are many problems which are regional or national in range or scope, fundamental in character, and which require concentration of effort and highly specialized research for their solution. These problems are specially suited for investigation by the Commonwealth.

Agriculture and Live Stock Husbandry.

3. The research problems confronting the agricultural and live stock industries may be classified broadly into three categories:—1. Investigation of principles underlying the practice of agriculture and live stock husbandry. This group of problems covers a considerable field, including soil problems, plant biology, production of farm crops, introduction of new plants and animals, and the conditions for the improvement of pastures, dairying, horticulture, apiculture, animal nutrition, and agricultural engineering. Investigations in this field which are of a more or less fundamental character and which are national in scope should be undertaken by the Commonwealth, while problems of a more or less local character and which involve the application of existing knowledge should be undertaken by the State Departments of Agriculture. 2. Production of new varieties of plants and animals. Plants.—Much valuable work has been accomplished by various State Departments of Agriculture, and many new and valuable varieties of wheat have been produced which have already led to a considerable increase in wheat yields. This work should be encouraged and extended to include other farm crops which have not been subjected to such intensive work. Two distinct types of problems are involved:—(a) Plant Genetics.—An investigation of the genetic, morphological, and other characters of plants grown in Australia, and an investigation of the genetic factors underlying disease resistance, (b) Plant Breeding.—The application of the results of (a) to the systematic improvement of existing varieties. The former group of problems (Plant Genetics) should be carried out by the Commonwealth. The latter (plant breeding) should be carried out by State Departments. Animals.—Problems of a somewhat similar division of Animal Genetics.—The breeding animals, and the study of characters of the animal body. 3. Investigation of the problems of cattle, wool, dairy and yield of wool and carcass of sheep, egg and meat production and yield of poultry, and the study of pests, with a group of research problems which are of national importance and which are highly specialized research work. This field, and form an appropriate field for Commonwealth investigation. Animal Breeding.—The application of existing knowledge of the breeding of animals. This field of work should be left to the State Departments of Agriculture.

Disease and its Control.

The field work in connection with diseases in plants and animals is vast, and increases with the intensification of production. The problems associated with disease in plants may be grouped broadly into three groups:—1. Investigation of the life history of the causal organism, the mode of infection and conditions of attack with a view to protecting control measures. 2. The application of known principles to the elimination of the disease. 3. The other problems are specially suited for Commonwealth investigation by the State Departments of Agriculture. Investigation of work on animal diseases might be regarded as within the sphere of Commonwealth, and they should be conducted in association with the States as regards field work.

Clearing House for Information.

4. The Council for Scientific and Industrial Research should be the clearing house agricultural institutions of the Commonwealth by acting as a clearing house for information on agricultural research, progress in State institutions and universities. The States should supply information on research and the Commonwealth should supply the States with similar information regarding its projects in agricultural research. 5. Australian Bureau of Agriculture by issuing a journal of Australian Scientific Research, which should be devoted to the publication of papers on agricultural science, which are too technical for inclusion in State Departmental journals, and which are not of sufficient international importance to be included in the scientific journals abroad. 6. In view of the difficulty of obtaining agricultural problems remaining unsolved and the great difficulty experienced by the State Departments of agriculture in obtaining suitably trained investigators it is recommended that the council should adopt a scheme which will enable the Commonwealth to make grants to the faculties of agriculture and veterinary science by notifying that appointments will be available for the purpose of the compilation of their university course or towards the completion of such.

Collaboration With States.

7. We consider that the ways in which the council for scientific and industrial research can assist Australia in the matter of agricultural advancement are by the establishment of a relationship (1) COSTIGAN. Between the council and State departments of agriculture, the universities, and other institutions concerned with agricultural research and investigation. It is understood that such cooperation would be compatible with the inception of individual organizations undertaking research activities. 8. It is desirable that the phases of agricultural research, indicated above, should be carried out as far as possible with the cooperation of universities, and that such practice should be encouraged, but when found impracticable the council should provide for such institutions. 9. To effect the desirable co-operation and necessary collaboration between the council and State departments, it is considered that the council should bring into existence a standing committee on agriculture, comprising the permanent officers of the State departments of agriculture and representatives of the council, such standing committee on agriculture should be the council's agricultural advisory body on matters relative to agricultural and live stock research undertaken by the Commonwealth.

Many of the investigations mentioned in this report and particularly those in connection with genetics involve prolonged research from which results of economic importance cannot be expected for many years.

Tropical Agricultural Research Station.

The conference is of the unanimous opinion that the institution of a tropical agricultural research station in Australia is essential as a forerunner of the successful economic development of the tropical parts of Australia and the mandated territories; and recommends the council for scientific and industrial research to approach the Commonwealth Government with a view to secure a special grant enabling the council to accept the offer made by the Burpee Marketing Board for the purpose of founding and maintaining such a station. This conference recommends that the council for scientific and industrial research take steps to secure an estimate of the probable cost and annual expenditure which would be involved in the erection, equipment, and conduct of such a tropical agricultural research station with a view to secure a special grant from the Commonwealth Government.

ADV. 31-3-27

THE DANGER OF MEDIOCRITY.

LECTURE BY PROFESSOR HANCOCK.

In connection with the tenth annual conference of the Australian Agricultural Association, Professor W. K. Hancock (Professor of History at the University of Adelaide) delivered a lecture on "The Danger of Mediocrity" at the Institute lecture-room, North-terrace, on Wednesday evening. The president of the association (Mr. A. E. Cook) was in the chair.

The lecturer said public opinion was the opinion of the average man of massed mediocrity, and mediocrity was offended by genius. Originality was the one thing which unoriginal minds could not feel the need of. We all great creative work must in the last resort be the work of individuals. Hamlet could not have been written by a committee. The Moma Lisa could not have been painted by an assembly, and a Parliament of competent musicians could not compose a Beethoven Symphony. Democracies might not care very much for these things, but they must realize that they were dependent even for their material prosperity on the minds which had increased, and would increase, man's control over nature. Modern society was intolerant of any criticism of its pabulum, and was preferring the "deep slumber of a decided opinion." It distributed any extravagant love of knowledge in its courses was to be discouraged strongly. There was another danger to individuality. This was an age of mass production and mass consumer; an age, that was to say, in which profit dominated taste. This was probably inevitable under the system of private initiative. Once simpler conditions, local market and craft-guild, it was assumed that the tradesman existed for the sake of the tradesman. Then the question of individual taste was decisive, and individual taste could assert itself. There could never be the highest craftmanship. Now they manufactured not only standardised goods, but standardised tastes. Mass production was a power which could not be confined to the industrial sphere. The furnishing factories producing for the mass production of taste, the newspapers were engaged in the mass production of ideas, and the education of the mass was a mass production of minds. Unless they realised the dangers of mass production, and the education of individual minds, they would assert themselves. The danger was greater, not less, in Australia, because of Australia's isolation. It was a diversity of races, ideas, and institutions, which had made Europe persistently creative, and so given to European civilization the dynamic of its progress. But Australians could not enjoy, or could enjoy only for brief periods, that stimulus of close contact with different nations and their ideas. Australia was more British than Great Britain. It had been settled by a solid group of people with middle-class aspirations. There was a serious danger of national inbreeding and reduction of the Australian population. Australian policy seemed to be directed to increasing rather than to diminish, these disadvantages. It had been pleased him to attack the dogma of protection, just because it was a dogma. A reasonable economic policy became dangerous when it was made a dogma. It was a silly and monstrous to use the Customs Department to hinder the development of a feeling for beautiful Australian homes. There might be worth while to follow Dame Nellie Melba's lead, and begin by protesting against the duties placed upon "foreign" paintings, drawings, and sculptures. If they loved their country they should not be content unless it gave something special and original and to the world, not those of England or Greece." They were only at the beginning of their history, and that was still the more reason for starting right, building, not patching, facing dangers, and aiming high. (Applause.)

ALSO REC.
ADV. 31-3-27

"BOOKS THE BEST UNIVERSITY."

Lecturing on "The Danger of Mediocrity," at the Institute Lecture-room, North-terrace, on Wednesday evening, Professor W. K. Hancock (professor of history at the University of Adelaide) said the battle against the dangers of mediocrity could be waged from day to day on small occasions. One could begin by fighting for the public library. Hundreds of thousands of pounds were spent on education, yet the public library was starved. Melbourne spent ten times the amount spent by Adelaide on books. They should expect that some at least of their citizens wished to read the best books that had been written and the best books that were being written. Books, he said, were the best university.

REG. 1-4-27

WORKERS' EDUCATIONAL ASSOCIATION.

Much enthusiasm was shown by the delegates to the annual conference of the Workers' Educational Association at the Institute Building, North Terrace, last night, on Friday evening. The President (Mr. A. G. Roberts) was in the chair.

The annual report presented by the secretary (Mr. G. McRitchie) stated in her address—From the commencement of the year, the past year had been more successful than that of the previous year, which was a record year in the history of the association. Over a number, the circulation of The Highway, the sale of books, the Harvard Lectures, the Friday evening classes, the Friday evening lectures, the Friday evening classes secretaries, members of the executive, the officers, and the [illegible] of the association, and last but not least, the part in helping forward the [illegible] in the association, Professor H. Barnley Naylor was appointed honorary director for tutorial classes for 1926 and undertook the work in an enthusiastic and wholehearted manner. The movement generally contributed to the validation of a solid white honorary director. Four public lectures had been delivered during March. The W.E.A. Club had arisen from extremely low average attendance at meetings during the year, and had been 160. The first quick growth of the students was one feature of the movement. The club had proved a great asset to the association. The Workers' Dramatic Society July a W.E.A. Dramatic Society had been started and had been successful. The W.E.A. Stage had been elected Chairman, and Mr. C. Read, Vice-Chairman. The W.E.A. Rambles had been successful. The group and outings almost monthly. The book service had become a great feature of the association's work. The tenth annual report of the joint committee of tutorial classes stated that the enrolments for tutorial classes during this year had been 1,000, and that 1,000 had been enrolled as students and the total average attendances had been consequently greater than the total number. Fourteen tutorial classes met within the University during the year. In addition, 10 full tutorial classes had been held in the suburbs and country, besides two forenight classes and one Saturday class in the country. The attendances had been well maintained throughout the year. Mr. A. Cleary, the report and balance sheet were adopted.

Mr. Hutson, M.P., moved, and Mr. R. Fryar, and Miss K. Hutson had displayed, "In what way can the W. E. A. extend its classes so as to meet the needs of the working class." He was a recommendation from this conference that a Bill to be English language be carried, "Carried."

Other recommendations were—"That the class be started in the science of psychology," and "That the conference go into the question of the association on educational matters in the association."

A resolution, submitted by the Women's Non-Party Group, was read:—"That in future the office-bearers committee of the Workers' Educational Association be elected by the proportional representation." The President vacated the chair, and moved an amendment, that the existing rules provide for election by exhaustive ballot should "be altered to read, "Carried." Mr. A. G. Roberts, Mr. Cibbins, Mr. G. Dawes, Mrs. C. R. Morris, and Miss R. Hodgson.

MAIL 2-4-27

April 5, 1882. Adelaide University Opened.

MAIL 2-4-27

MUSICAL MOMENTS

(By "Staccato")

The student concert at the Conservatorium last Monday evening set the ball rolling, both as to the musical fixtures of the institution and the concert season generally. The hall was crowded with enthusiastic listeners, who were well pleased with the musical fare presented by the young students.

Several sections of practical study were represented, and a number of beautiful voices were heard. Miss Ethel Greenwood gave an effective rendering of the bracket of modern songs by Cyril Scott, and Miss Jean Berry, a sympathetic interpretation of Schubert's "Have I Lost Thee, Love, for Ever?"

Miss Katie Yoerger, a talented young violinist, showed admirable tone, tempo, phrasing and technique in Saint-Saens' "Habanera," and several young pianists vied with each other for distinction. They necessitated an interpretive skill were exemplary. A rich number was a "cello ensemble by Mrs. Edgar Bright, Miss Hilda Harris, and Mr. Geoffrey Goldsworthy. The latter is an Elder scholar, who promises to be a foremost player. The fine organ accompaniments were played by Miss Ethel Mary Arnold Farley, another Elder scholar.

The Conservatorium String Quartet, the leading chamber music ensemble in Adelaide, is getting busy again, and the subscription concerts which were inaugurated last season will in all probability continue this coming year. In the meantime the quartet will be largely responsible for the chamber music concert to be given by the Conservatorium on April 11, when Beethoven's String Quartet in G minor, Op. 18, and a piano quartet in A major by Ernest Chausson will be presented. Mr. George Pearce will be the pianist, and Mr. Clive Carey will contribute the vocal numbers.