

THE NEWS

ADELAIDE: MONDAY, JULY 23, 1928

CANCER RESEARCH WORK

Discussions at the International Cancer Conference in London indicate the serious nature of the problem confronting scientists in respect of one of the most dreaded diseases of mankind. The campaign against cancer has become world-wide.

With the reports of the conference comes the announcement that the South Australian Federal health authorities have succeeded in forming a representative Cancer Treatment and Research Committee. This body will work in conjunction with the Adelaide Hospital and the University.

The Commonwealth Department of Health has intimated its willingness to lend a portion of a supply of radium recently imported by it. In New South Wales, Queensland, and Victoria treatment and research work by means of radium have been already begun with the co-operation of the Commonwealth Department.

South Australia has lagged behind, but now that a start has been made there should be no further delay. The local committee will meet on Wednesday to elect a chairman and decide upon its procedure. It is essential that the chairman selected should be a medical man and that he should be free to devote much of his time to the business.

Funds will be required to finance this vital movement. In other parts of the world large sums have been subscribed. The general public must be brought to realise the importance of the subject. The disease of cancer is claiming hundreds of victims every year in South Australia.

There is no doubt that the Lord Mayor, if requested by the committee, will be prepared to call a public meeting. The intense interest of Sir Neville Howse (Commonwealth Health Minister) is well known. He has stated that if a public meeting is convened he will attend, and that it is possible that the Governor-General and the Prime Minister will also endeavor to be present.

Adelaide cannot afford to stand apart. Something must be done and done promptly.

to me. Apparently I am supposed to administer a great school, but someone else will handle and decide all financial matters affecting it. In view of what I have seen take place at this council table, not only at the last few meetings, but ever since I have been a member of it, I repeat that I will have to consider my position as a member of it very carefully.

Dr. Wilson (chairman of the finance committee) next replied to the criticism of the financial statements made by Professor Laby at the previous meeting. He said that Professor Laby had "juggled" with the figures. After replying to the points made by Professor Laby, Dr. Wilson added:—"I protest against the greater part of each meeting being given over to consideration by professors of professors' salaries. The business of each meeting has to be rushed through in the last few minutes because all the time has been occupied in baiting the finance committee. The committee is made the target of the animosity of the staff, its obloquy, and its open insults. The staff's line of action tends to drive self-respecting men from the council. Already the non-academic members find the proceedings of the council so futile and so boring that they absent themselves from the meetings in large numbers."

Surplus Or Deficit?

On behalf of the finance committee a statement was submitted answering Professor Laby's criticisms. This statement said, among other things:—

Professor Laby claims in effect that there is no justification for the warning that the accounts are in danger of drifting into a precarious position, or for the statement that outgoings are being barely met by income. The statement that the years 1925-6-7 were ones of financial drift has been challenged. The general account receipts for those three years totalled £342,723, and the expenditure £348,726. It is true that the deficit was due to heavy necessary expenditure in 1925 sanctioned by the council, and that the leeway thus caused was being made up during 1926 and 1927. It must, however, be recollected that during 1927 we had the special grant of £10,000 made for that year alone, and that the fact that its renewal could not be relied on compelled the utmost care. The position as to a present deficit or surplus will be materially altered if, as we now hope, it is decided that the commerce figures may be embodied in the general account. If so embodied, the effect will be that 1928 will commence with a surplus of £23,350, and according to the estimates it should itself have a surplus of £1,310. Professor Laby complains that the 1927 estimates were out by £3,450. That was only 2.7 per cent. of the total budget. The estimated surplus for 1928 is only 1½ per cent. of the total budget, and in the opinion of the finance committee it is all too small a margin on which to work in view of the unforeseen routine calls, many of them very urgent and very necessary, which are constantly being made. The increased fees are taking effect this year for the first time. They will not have their full effect until next year, and it has not been an easy matter to estimate their effect on this year. The finance committee cannot therefore at present feel confident that the expected surplus will be realised.

A further statement submitted by Professor Laby attacked the accuracy of statements made by the finance committee in a memorandum on professorial salaries submitted to the council on June 25. These statements were that there was a deficit in the University finances in 1927, that the finances were rapidly drifting into the same precarious position as in 1925-6-7, and that in 1928 outgoings would be barely met by income. He submitted that the general account of the University for 1927 showed a surplus of £1,495, and that including a transfer of £4,000 to general investments the real surplus was £5,495. This did not take into account a surplus of £1,556 in the commerce school. Nor did it include a surplus in the dividend on the Myer shares of £4,375. Including these amounts the surplus for 1927 was shown to be £11,426. "Whatever way the accounts are looked at," concluded Professor Laby, "I can find no justification for the finance committee's statement that 'even last year there was a deficit,' or the use of the words 'precarious' and 'serious position' in relation to the University finances for 1927 and 1928."

Decision Against Increases.

A long statement of the views of associate professors and senior lecturers on the question of salaries was also submitted to the council. This statement, signed by Associate-Professor H. S. Summers, strongly urged that, as the council had fixed the minimum salary for recently appointed professors at £1,200, in equity those members of the professorial board who were in receipt of a lower salary should be raised to £1,200. Adjustments in the salaries of the sub-professorial staff were also asked. At present, it was claimed, there was no correlation between salary and length of service. Increased salaries were asked for associate professors, independent lecturers, and senior lecturers.

The finance committee asked the council to direct it as to the lines of policy on which future recommendations by the committee on salaries should be based.

Mr. Justice Lowe moved:—
(1) That in fixing professorial salaries regard

must always be had to the financial policy of the University.

(2) The present time is inopportune for raising existing salaries.

(3) In the event of a chair or other position falling vacant the question of any increase in salary to be offered should be decided upon the basis of the then financial position of the University.

Mr. M. P. Hansen seconded the motion "Meetings of the council," he remarked, "appear to be becoming more and more unpleasant. It is much to be regretted."

Mr. Latham (Federal Attorney-General) said that members of the council were apparently facing a very critical position in University affairs. He regarded professors' salaries as inadequate and insufficient. They should be raised if possible, but the practical question was the allocation of the funds available. Even accepting Professor Laby's view of the financial position, he did not consider substantial increases to be justified at present.

"A person charged with the decision as to the amount of his own emoluments is in a very difficult and delicate position," added Mr. Latham. "While admitting the legal right of professorial members of the council to vote on these questions, I would add that some rights are given because of belief in the recipient's discretion in using them. We are all here as trustees. No trustee would think of increasing his own salary, nor would he be allowed to do so. That also applies to company directors. The only exceptions are members of Parliament. If the members of the University staff take a large part in determining their own salaries, then the important principle of the autonomy of the University is likely to be considerably injured."

Professor Laby Leaves.

Professor Laby.—I personally find the work as a member of this council very heavy. I have done much work on it in which it will be admitted I have had no personal interest. But I can no longer waste my time on a body which changes its mind so frequently as this one does. I have other matters of more interest and importance to me. In view of your remarks, Mr. Chancellor, I herewith tender my resignation.

Grasping his hat and coat Professor Laby at once left the room.

As the motion was being put Professor Berry also left the room. The motion was agreed to with only two or three dissentients.

Professor Ernest Scott said that he resented the imputation that professors on the council had acted as a body to improve their own financial position and that of their colleagues. He had been most careful never to speak on any matter affecting the salaries of himself or his colleagues.

Professor Skeats strongly supported Professor Scott.

The council then passed to other business.

An application by Mr. M. P. Hansens for the publication by the University of a report which he had prepared on the class A system was referred to the finance committee, with a recommendation that it should be granted.

Reports were received that £4,000, free of conditions, had been bequeathed to the University under the will of Mr. Edwin Franks Millar, of Armadale, and that a further £1,500 had been received from Mr. R. B. Ritchie towards the endowment of the Ritchie chair of economics.

It was decided to take no action on a request by the Society of Friends that the University should appoint delegates to a conference to consider the question of a demonstration in favour of disarmament to be made on Armistice Day.

Mr. W. E. Bassett submitted his resignation as lecturer in engineering, to date from the end of the year, because he was entering private practice. The resignation was accepted with regret, and the Vice-Chancellor (Sir John Monash) paid a tribute to Mr. Bassett's high abilities and services to the University and his work in the development of aviation.

ADV. 26.7.28
Professor Brailsford Robertson will leave for Melbourne on Sunday to deliver the T. S. Hall memorial lecture at the Melbourne University on Tuesday. His subject will be "Growth and Longevity in Men and Animals."

ARGUS (MELB) 17.7.28

PROFESSORS' SALARIES.

UNIVERSITY COUNCIL DEBATE

MEMBER ABRUPTLY RESIGNS.

Resentment at Chancellor's Rebuke.

Bitter feelings which have been apparent during financial discussions at recent meetings of the University Council came to a head yesterday. At the previous meeting Professor Laby had submitted a long statement criticising the finance committee, and attacking the accuracy of its declaration that the financial position of the University was becoming precarious. This declaration had originally been made by the finance committee in a memorandum on professors' salaries.

When Professor Laby made his statement it was taken in committee, but the finance committee's reply yesterday was taken in open council. There were several angry scenes.

Decision Challenged.

Professor Laby first moved that in future the complete University accounts, the auditor-general's report on University finances, and the finance committee's estimates for the year be circulated among members of the council as soon as available and be set down for discussion at the ensuing meeting of the council. This was agreed to.

Then Professor Laby moved that in future any recommendations by the finance committee to the council for new expenditure should be placed on the notice-paper. "My immediate reason," he said, "is that at last meeting it was decided on a vote to allocate part of the Myer fund to the erection of a caretaker's cottage for the Conservatorium of Music. That was agreed to hurriedly, but if it had been on the notice paper opportunity would have been given to point out that it was contrary to our statutes, which stipulate that none of the ordinary funds of the University shall be used for the conservatorium."

The Chancellor (Sir John MacFarland) said it is not fair to expect us to consider the legality of that vote at this stage. We will have to go into it.

The motion was agreed to.

The Chancellor then said:—"I speak with deliberation when I say that anyone present at the last few meetings must have felt that some members of the teaching staff who are members of this council are not alive to the delicacy of their position when questions of University expenditure and salaries are being considered. Of the total annual expenditure of the University, amounting to more than £100,000, 75 per cent. is for salaries. Very great care is therefore required on the part of members of the teaching staff who are members of the council if they are to guard against acting in their personal interests. It is true that they have committed no breach of the regulations, which provide that a member shall not vote on a matter in which he is directly pecuniarily interested. But I would like to see that regulation observed in the spirit as well as in the letter, and not so much emphasis placed on the word "direct." It should be recalled that before 1923 there were only three members of the teaching staff on the council, and by Act of Parliament in that year the number was increased to five. The value of professors in the council debates was recognised, but I am sure that neither the Ministry nor Parliament had any intention of diverting the teaching staff from its proper work of teaching and research to financial management, which can be better dealt with by other members of the council who have no interest, either direct or indirect, in the matters to be decided, but who are guided solely by the interests of the University."

Professor Laby replied that he had merely followed a ruling of Sir Harrison Moore that professors had a right to discuss financial matters.

The Chancellor.—No one has questioned your legal right.

Professor Berry Astonished.

Professor Berry (heatedly).—After such a statement by the chancellor I will have to consider my position on the council very carefully. I have yet to learn that members of the teaching staff are not to be allowed to express any opinion on matters of finance without being charged with considering their personal interests.

The Chancellor.—No one has made such an extreme charge. Please be careful to remember what I did say, and not to place another interpretation on it.

Professor Berry.—Very well, sir. Having been associated with universities all my life, I say that your view is entirely new