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IMPORTANCE OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

National Scheme Proposed By Prof. Kerr Grant

MELBOURNE ADDRESS

MELBOURNE August 15.

An extensive programme of scientific research, undertaken on a national scale, was advocated by Professor Kerr Grant, of Adelaide University in his presidential address at the University tonight at the opening of the conference of Australian physicists.

Apart from the enormous economic returns from systematic research in applied science, Professor Kerr Grant emphasised the national importance of research in pure science, without which, he maintained, no country could hope to take a leading place among nations of the future.

Such a scheme must be sponsored and financed by the Commonwealth Government, he added, with the backing of all the States. The financial endowment must be on a scale commensurate with the quantity and quality aimed at, and no aim could be too high. It must not be subject to political control or interference, although its governing body must acknowledge full responsibility to the Government supporting it. The relative advantages of centralisation and decentralisation must be more carefully weighed, and also the question of the degree of affiliation with universities, the only existing bodies, as far as he could see, which were in any way suited to be entrusted with it.

Professor Kerr Grant said he favored independent research institutes affiliated with the universities, on the lines of the Waite Institute for Agricultural Research in South Australia, rather than an extension of the activities of the universities in the direction of research.

Physicists Entertained

More than 50 members attending the conference were entertained at luncheon at the University. They were welcomed by the Chancellor (Sir John MacFarland), the Vice-Chancellor (Sir James Barrett), and the president of the professorial board (Professor W. E. Agar).

In the afternoon a visit was paid to the laboratories of the Defence Department, where research and testing work is undertaken for munition works and other activities of the department.

Tomorrow a paper will be delivered on "The Motions of Electrons in Gases," by Professor V. A. Bailey (Sydney). The conference will continue until Friday afternoon.

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University Librarian Appointed

The council of the University has appointed as librarian Mr. W. A. Cowan, of Wellington College, New Zealand. Mr. Cowan graduated master of arts in the University of New Zealand with first class honors in Latin and French in 1929, and then went to University College, London University, where he graduated with first class honors in classics (Latin and Greek).

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Removal Of Buildings From Jubilee Oval

The Jubilee Oval has been taken over by the University, and the Government is inviting offers for the purchase and removal of the machinery hall and the galvanized iron grandstands. It is stipulated that the buildings must be removed by October 13. The other buildings on the oval will not be taken down.

It is the intention of the University to use the land for building and other purposes as required.

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The Vice-Chancellor (Sir William Mitchell) will represent the Adelaide University at the meeting of the Standing Advisory Committee of Australian Universities in Melbourne on August 22.

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PROPOSED CLOSING OF OBSERVATORIES

Retention Of Perth And Canberra Advised

MELBOURNE, August 16.

The question of the restriction of Observatory work, which was referred to the conference of physicists by the Commonwealth Government, was discussed this afternoon at their meeting at the University. The chief executive officer of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (Dr. A. C. D. Rivett) described the work of a committee which had been formed by the Commonwealth Government after the Premiers' Conference, with the object of recommending means of removing the overlapping of activities of State Observatories.

At the Premiers' Conference last year, he said, it had been decided that the Observatories should be reduced from five to two, for reasons of economy. The committee had not been asked to consider the question of the retention, but merely to recommend the two Observatories to be retained. Taking into consideration the means of disposing of surplus equipment and the cost of extra equipment which would be needed, the committee had recorded that the most essential Observatories were at Perth and Canberra. It had also advised that, until Perth could be adequately equipped, it would be preferable to retain the Melbourne Observatory, with its superior equipment.

Professor Laby criticised the present method of sending out time signals by State Observatories, and said the full substitution of a Federal service of highly accurate time signals would save money, and free some of the Observatories for more astronomical research. The State time services were a survival from earlier days.

A proposal that closer co-operation should exist between the Observatories and the Universities was made by Professor A. D. Ross, of Perth, and supported by the Government Astronomer of South Australia (Mr. G. F. Dodwell), and Sir Thomas Lyle, of Melbourne.

On the motion of Sir Thomas Lyle, a sub-committee was formed to frame resolutions.

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YOUNG UNIVERSITY LIBRARIAN

Will be Here in December

Mr. W. A. Cowan, of Wellington College, New Zealand, who has been appointed librarian at the University of Adelaide, is expected to arrive in Adelaide early in December to begin his new duties.

Mr. Cowan, who is only 25 years of age, was selected from more than 80 applicants, including 20 from England. He was educated in New Zealand, and secured his Master of Arts degree, with first-class honors in Latin and French, at the Otago University. Mr. Cowan also won scholarships in Latin and French.

Mr. Cowan pursued a post-graduate study in Latin and Greek at the University College, London University, and obtained the Foyle prize for senior Latin. He secured his Bachelor of Arts degree at the London University with honors and first-class in classics. Afterwards Mr. Cowan spent some time at the Grenoble University, France.

The registrar of the University (Mr. Eardley) said today that when considering applications the University Council decided to appoint, if possible, an applicant who could assist in teaching and examining work at the University. This was the usual practice in British universities.

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MR. J. Q. Ewens left Adelaide for Canberra this week to take up a position as legal assistant in the Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department, Canberra. He was admitted to the South Australian Bar in 1929, and since then had been managing clerk to Messrs. Knox and Hargrave.

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Mrs. K. M. Kerr Grant, wife of Professor Kerr Grant, of the Adelaide University, and Mr. Colin Kerr Grant, who graduated at Adelaide University with first class honors in mathematics, will leave for London by the Oronsay on Thursday. Mr. Kerr Grant is going to Cambridge University to continue his studies.

News 17-8-33

100 YEARS FROM NOW

PROFESSOR LETS FANCY LOOSE

"Conference in The Moon"

MELBOURNE, Thursday.

Round the world in a single flight, aeroplanes on every roof, new and strange animals, television to the other side of the world—these are some of the things that will be accepted as a matter of course in 100 years' time, according to Prof. Kerr Grant, of Adelaide, who is president of the Physics Conference now being held in Melbourne.

He let his fancy wander into the probabilities and possibilities of the future. "To be scientific and apply the rule of three," he said in an interview, "there would, of course, be more motor cars, more wireless, and many more aeroplanes."

"But in 100 years' time new methods of storing power will have been found, by means of which an aeroplane will be able to fly round the world in a single flight in 30 hours, instead of eight days. Fuel for the journey would be contained in a receptacle the size of a matchbox."

Conference by Radio

"It is open to anybody today to imagine that some new store of energy—atomic, for instance, will be unlocked in the future. Traffic problems will be uplifted—everyone is sure to have an aeroplane—and houses will be built so that youths and families will be able to keep their planes on the roof."

"Then there is television. Some day people will be able to sit comfortably in their homes and exchange glances with people talking to them by telephone on the other side of the world, as if they were in the same room."

"And imagine a world conference in 100 years. It may be held by a delegate from each nation sitting at his own fireside and listening and conversing by means of pocket radio."

"As an alternative, it might be held in the moon."

Changing Cities

Coming back to earth, he drew attention to the changing order of cities. "Cities of the world," he said, "are changing every day, and will be changed so much in 100 years' time that nothing of the old one will remain. The cities of the future, I hope, will be based on more hygienic and aesthetic lines than at present."

"Already we are accelerating the rate of progress so much that in less than a century no city in the world will be anything like it is today."

"What else does the future hold?" he was asked.

"Consult J. B. S. Haldane's 'Possible Worlds,' Aldous Huxley's 'Brave New World'—which I have never read and never want to—and H. G. Wells' 'Time Machine,'" said Prof. Kerr Grant, "and you will be no wiser."

"Whatever the world is 100 years hence, it will be so startling that it will be more than Haldane, Wells, or Huxley could possibly imagine."

"As for the population, it is 2,000 millions today. If it is not checked in some way it will be about 8,000 millions in 100 years' time. That is too horrible to contemplate."

"I do not believe in robots. They are feeble things. Machines will never be equal to the tasks that the future holds. "Possibly there will be many new and strange animals, and humans, too, although there could not be anything much stranger than human beings as they are now."

"After all, as the old Scottish proverb says, 'there is nothing sae queer as folk.'"

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Mr. R. C. L. Bosworth, accompanied by his wife, will leave for England by the Largs Bay today. Mr. Bosworth, who was recently awarded by the Commissioners of the 1851 Exhibition in Great Britain, a physics research scholarship, will continue research work in the Department of Colloid Physics at Cambridge University.

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Few Positions For University Graduates

According to the Vice-Chancellor of the Melbourne University (Sir James Barrett) there are not sufficient qualified persons in Victoria to fill positions available in certain industrial and commercial pursuits, but officials of the Adelaide University said yesterday that students who had secured their diplomas in engineering courses and commercial courses had difficulty in securing positions.

Although there is an Appointments Board at the Adelaide University, it has had little work to do. The board brings together a graduate and his prospective employer, but does not secure appointments for students. It was stated that the professors at the University did much to enable students to secure positions.

Officials of the School of Mines said that they had not noticed an increased demand for students. An exception was mining metallurgy, graduates in which could always find positions.

The Superintendent of Technical Education (Dr. Fenner) said that there was more enquiry for boys from trades schools, and the number of apprentices was slowly increasing. There had been a distinct improvement in the last two years. Many scholars from the high schools had been placed in banks, offices, and the various trades.

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QUALIFYING FOR THE UNIVERSITY

Existing Examination Methods Discussed

MELBOURNE, August 23.

The headmaster of Geelong Grammar School (Mr. J. R. Darling) representing the Headmasters' Conference of Australia, addressed the Vice-Chancellor's committee at the University of Melbourne today on entrance examinations for Australian Universities.

Although he did not define any definite policy, Mr. Darling said it was recognised that matriculation requirements influenced the whole of secondary education.

The Vice-Chancellor's committee, which represents all the Australian universities, decided that a representative should be sent to one of the headmasters' conferences to discuss matriculation examinations.

A suggestion was made that schools should adopt a system of examinations in general knowledge for pupils when they were aged about 15 years, and that an examination in special subjects, with a university career in view, should follow two years later. The first examination would correspond with the leaving certificate and the last to the honors examination. No action was decided upon.

During the conference, Sir Robert Garran had an informal discussion with the committee regarding the Canberra University College.

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MIDDAY ORGAN MUSIC Conservatorium Recital

Delightful organ music was heard at the Elder Conservatorium luncheon-recital yesterday. Mr. John Horner gave a fine interpretation of the Walford Davies "Solemn Melody," and brought out well the virile message of the Healey Willan "Epilogue." Three original hymn-tune studies, concerned with "Veni, Veni, Emmanuel," "Regnator Orbis," and Turle's "Westminster" revealed the recitalist in a new vein. The final rhapsody proved particularly effective.

Miss Rita Nelson, to the pianoforte accompaniment of Miss Gwen Paul, sang "One Fine Day," from Puccini's "Madam Butterfly," with much charm.

On August 31 the last of this year's series of recitals will be given in connection with Music Week observance. An extended programme will begin at 1 p.m. In addition to characteristic organ compositions of Bach, Debussy, and Widor, Mr. Horner will play request numbers, application for which should reach him at the Conservatorium not later than Tuesday morning. With Miss Dorothea Angus at the piano, he will render the "Coriolan" overture of Beethoven. Vocal solos will be contributed by Miss Austria Reka and Mr. Alan Cheek.

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Dr. M. R. Jacobs, who has been in the north of Australia for several months investigating timber resources on behalf of the Federal Government, returned to Adelaide last night on the train from Alice Springs. He went to Darwin by steamer in June, and worked southward. He intends to leave for Melbourne early next week.