

THE FIRST OF THE DEGREE and diploma examinations for this year began at the University today. Two batches of 300 candidates will sit each day and nearly 100 commerce students each night. Some of the students going into the examination room.

adv. 14-11-35

"BRITISHNESS" OF MALTA

Professor Hancock's Visit ANOTHER DESTINY TIED TO THE LEAGUE

Professor Hancock turns from his brief picture of Rome in the throes of anti-League of Nations, anti-British propaganda, to a concise examination of the problems of the islands of Malta, whose destiny he thinks is bound up with the future of the League. The first article was published yesterday.

By PROFESSOR W. K. HANCOCK

I LIKED the Maltese people. I liked the merry way they improved the darkened hour with flitting and serenading on that serious night when the military authorities arranged a black-out as an experiment for anti-aircraft defence. I liked them because they shared me a lid for a pot of coffee and \$d. for a litre of quite drinkable wine; and also because they are making a good beer of the Pilsener type for half the price which the Germans charge. (The beer is called Cisk; you can get it in London; has it made its way yet to Adelaide?) I liked them because with all the temptations which tourists have subjected them to, they haven't learnt to haggle and exploit. I liked them because of its historic interest and its beauty. I liked it because it produces good scholars and charming civilised hosts. And I liked them for the way in which young people tan about the streets in shorts on the way to football grounds, or splashed about in the warm Mediterranean Sea.

The last sentence reminds me of the first Maltese problem. There is plenty of sea, but a shortage of football grounds. And you can't make more football grounds without invading the rock or displacing a peasant family. Over-shadowing the future of the people of Malta is the population problem. No matter how ingenious they are, they won't be able to keep all their children on the island.

They manage to get on fairly well now by trade with the Mediterranean fleet, and with visiting military steamers, but making one or two good things (like beer, for example) to export, and partly by the emigration of British subjects, they cultivate every inch of their soil, but rich soil. Still, their future depends on emigration. There are many facts, they should, in theory, have not very much difficulty with that. In practice, they know that there are great difficulties. Possibly these are temporary. The Dominions have no room at the moment for many more immigrants. Industries, but they have room in the future for skilled peasants and workers. It is only to increase the carrying capacity of their internal market.

Sea Routes

The second Maltese problem, is of course, the sea. Malta is a strategic base in the centre of the British Empire's mercantile and naval communications. It is equally important to the trade of Great Britain, India, and Australasia. Looked at from another

point of view, it breaks the line of Italy's communications with her north African empire. In the kind of world which is easy and pleasant to sketch on paper, a world in which the League of Nations Assembly would be a legislative body with power to command, the League of Nations Council an executive responsible to the Assembly, and which all armed forces would be under the control of the League, Malta's geographical position would not be important. Even in the Locrasso world of a few years back, it seemed a quite comfortable position. But suddenly this world has receded, let us hope temporarily, and Malta finds herself facing the fanaticism of early Fascist days, when Mussolini, in his revolutionary speeches, was denouncing the "parasites of the Mediterranean" and Malta, Corsica, was marked on patriotic maps as terra irredenta. To a stranger, Malta's reaction to this deteriorated international situation appears understandable, but rather un-sensible. It takes the form of simple and fervent opposition to the League of Nations. It calmly expressed, is a depressing virtue in a world which is nowadays suffering from the effects of the League. The Maltese civilian population is more British than the British. Admirals and generals cannot hope to emulate its imperial fervor.

The Maltese compare their island to a fortress of a battleship. Mr. Winston Churchill once asked the question: Could you set up a parliamentary constitution on a battleship? The British Government made this experiment after the war. Malta was given responsibility for its internal affairs. But the constitution had to be suspended a few years ago. Now, at the same time the parliamentary system was temporarily set aside in Newfoundland. Frenzied finance was partly responsible for the failure in both islands.

But in these three islands, the cause. There was a sort of Montague and Capulet feud between rival clans. And the loyalty issue was dragged in. One faction wished to encourage the use of Italian (the language of legal business) and the other faction wished to check it. Very foolish! In the writer's opinion, the opponents of the Italian language posed as super-loyalists. Very stupidly, extremists of the other faction formed secret societies in which they indulged in nationalist expansionism. Neither side respected the rules and limits of constitutional decorum.

Language Revival

As a result, Malta is again today under the Crown Colony government. As another result, the Maltese language has been revived. The British Government cut the knot by making not Italian and not English, but Maltese the language of the law, the farm and the kitchen. His enthusiastic supporters derive it, rather improbably, from the legends of Italian. School scholars are now having the time of their lives with word-building experiments. It is the revival of an old language of culture and scientific progress. Whether or not they will succeed, the present writer is not prepared to comment to say. In the meantime, the scholars are enjoying new sensations. They are reading Italian, French, German, and reading Maltese newspapers with avidity.

There are also the problems of a little community which is intensely preoccupied with its own affairs and at the same time interested in the world. It has the largest buses which vex the present-day world. Everything

in Malta wears an intensely local aspect. Yet the future of the Maltese people does not depend primarily on anything that happens on the little island. It will be determined by the success which the nations, and especially the European nations, achieve in establishing the rule of law in their political relations and the rule of reason in their economic activities.

FIRST CROSSING OF DESERT

Dr. Bertram Thomas, the first European to cross the South Arabian Desert, lectured last night to 400 people, many of whom were content to sit for more than two hours on the steps of the passageways in the physics lecture theatre at the Adelaide University, on an imaginary trip from the Arabian Sea through the desert to the Persian Gulf. Dr. Thomas spoke on "The First Crossing of the Great South Arabian Desert", and his remarks were illustrated with a rare and valued collection of slides and an excellent film. He said that the first crossing of the Arabia had been carried out entirely by the single-handed adventurer, at his own time and expense. It was necessary to assume disguise and carry on an expedition secretly. A beard must be grown, because an Arab sworn by his beard. Slides revealed that Arabia was not all desert. One showed a thick blue gum, figs and other trees that thrived as the result of the continual drizzle of rain during the summer months. It was in that forest region that Dr. Thomas made a collection of 700 fauna specimens which he sent to the British Museum. The lecturer described the differences between the southern and northern Arab. The Arabs were suspicious of what they did not understand, and he was for that reason that Dr. Thomas said he took a chance of exposing some of the instruments he took for observation purposes. Dr. Thomas referred to the phenomenon of "the desert sand." He described it as a drowning noise, which he explained as a sound of sands below, similar to the sound of a siren of a boat. The sound lasted suddenly in deep tones, and ended as abruptly as it began. Thomas, accompanied by his wife, will leave by the Oranva today for Perth.

From Our Special Correspondent
MELBOURNE, November 13

University Ideals

The Vice-Chancellor of the University (Dr. Priestley) is strongly opposed to the idea of the University as a factory for manufacturing degrees. In his short term as Vice-Chancellor he never tired of pressing his case. He said that the University is an intimate fellowship of students and staff, and he rewarded his persistence by agreeing to establish the new office of students' adviser or warden of the University. This office, which will be introduced in duties, briefly, will be to introduce a new corporate spirit among students. That is what the former University graduate will be sought. Dr. Priestley is plain spoken about the spiritual side of the University. He hopes that the appointment of a student friend will be only a beginning. He says: "I think that we cannot persuade the people of Victoria that the University is worth anything as a University. It is worth what it is because it is a University. It is worth it as a University, the sooner we let it lapse into a technical school the better."

The fifth presentation of the Sir Joseph Verco Medal will be made at a meeting of the Royal Society tonight, when His Excellency the Governor (Sir Winston Dugan) will hand the medal to Professor T. Harvey Johnston, Professor of Zoology at the University of Adelaide. This medal is conferred from time to time upon any member of the Royal Society in this State for scientific work which is deemed worthy of the honor. The previous recipients of the medal are Sir Douglas Macdonald, Professor J. B. Cleland and Walter C. Howchin, and Mr. J. M. Black.

Professor L. F. Giblin, Professor of Economics at the Melbourne University, has applied to the University Council for permission to accept the appointment offered him by the Commonwealth Bank Board. He has suggested that he be permitted to retain £200 of the £800 which he would be paid as a member of the board, and that the remainder be paid to the University, in order that it might be used to retain a research fellow in economics.

adv. 15-11-35

Dr. A. J. Hackendorff was appointed an honorary anaesthetist at the Adelaide Hospital by Executive Council yesterday.

Mail 16-11-35

Sands that Sing

DR. Bertram Thomas, the noted explorer, who was in Adelaide this week is one of the few white men who has heard the singing sands of Arabia. He encountered them during his memorable trek across the arid heart of that country a few years ago.

While riding through the southern desert late one afternoon, he heard a loud droning noise, not unlike that of an aeroplane passing fairly low overhead. He looked to see where there was an aeroplane about, but naturally there was not. His tribunes then explained that the noise was the "singing of the sands."

The exact cause of the deep note given by the sands has never been explained, but the sudden contraction caused by a sharp fall in temperature towards evening probably accounts for it.

ELDER SCHOLAR

AT present there is speculation as to whether the Elder Scholarship will be awarded.

Among the entrants the names of several talented students are conspicuous by their absence, which is not surprising when it is remembered that the Elder Scholarship is awarded only to students who have completed their musical education in France or Germany. The weak spot about this scholarship is that the winner must study in England—to be exact, at the Royal College of Music, London.

It should be noted without significance to the guardians of the Elder Trust Fund that whereas the more talented of the students at the Royal College contrive somehow to complete their musical education in France or Germany, our Elder scholars have to be content with that which is obviously not considered adequate by young English musicians. The sacred twist the Elder Scholarship and English academies could be broken to every-
one's advantage.