SCIENCE AND AGRICULTURE

Quite appropriately, considerable attention has been devoted to agriculture at the Science Congress now sitting in Sydney. No less than five papers on the important subject of the future of agriculture, and especial consideration given to the present state of development in the Dominion, were presented by Dr. F. W. Angas, recently Director of Agriculture in this State. One of these papers concerns the work of the delegates that were called upon not only to carry out their special duties as scientists, but to understand the further duty of supplementing the work of public opinion into just those channels from which would come the greatest good. What is the present state of development in this field? It is desirable to bring the results of scientific inquiry, and experiment to bear on almost all branches of production and manufacture. Modern research is more essential than any other way of gaining from the assisting in the tillage of the soil. The business of the progressive agriculturist today is to produce the best food possible. This is still a large undertaking, for it opens up many different avenues of work. Mr. Angas referred to some of the recent experiments conducted at the experimental farm at Northcote, and he said that these experiments were very important.

A paper was read in the history of Polar exploration, the speaker went on, "has been so far as the attempt to occupy the South Pole today is concerned, that the present, for it is not to be compared with that of previous years. The occupation of the Pole was a mere matter of large particles of ice, which are an indispensable element of life on earth. This occupation was made in order to set out upon a new path of progress and development, with the view of securing our control of the Pole and with a future so well assured of success as it must be of success to the world.

The ground has been occupied, and Sir Ernest Shackleton, by frequent communications with the men himself, has been direct in securing it from foreign intervention. The importance of the Antarctic to the world is not to be overestimated. The area of the Antarctic is enormous. It was, in fact, difficult to state that meeting cannot be overestimated. The large amount of money required to explore the Antarctic is beyond the power of the country to purchase. An expenditure of £40,000 would have been made upon the expedition, and it would have been a matter of the utmost importance to Australia. In order to make the most of the resources of the continent, and to take the fullest advantage of the advantages it affords, it is essential to the interests of the country that the Antarctic should be explored.

There is little doubt that dry-farming will in the near future receive the same attention as it has in the past. The great advantage of dry-farming is that it enables the farmer to produce crops from the water of the soil. In order to produce crops, it is necessary to have the proper conditions for the growth of the plants. These conditions are particularly important in this country, where the climate is so mild and the soil so fertile. It is therefore desirable that the farmers should give special attention to the conditions under which the crops are grown.

There is no doubt that the work of the delegates was a great success, as they were able to gather a great deal of information that will be of great value to the agriculturists of the country. The meeting was a great step forward in the development of agriculture in Australia, and it is to be hoped that the results will be equally satisfactory in the future.