

Register, July 19th, 1910

BRITISH SCIENCE GUILD.

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN BRANCH.

SUCCESSFUL INAUGURATION.

The inaugural meeting of the South Australian branch of the British Science Guild was held at the lecture hall in the Institute Building, North terrace, on Monday evening. There was a large and representative gathering. Among those on the platform were—His Excellency the Governor, the Premier (Hon. J. Verran), the Minister of Education (Hon. F. W. Coneybeer), the Treasurer (Hon. C. Vaughan), and the Chief Secretary (Hon. F. S. Wallis).

—Objects.—

The objects of the organization, briefly stated, are:—“To bring together as members of one guild all those throughout the Empire interested in science and scientific method, in order by joint action to convince the people by means of publications, meetings, lectures, conferences, and by deputations, of the necessity to apply the methods of science to all branches of human endeavour, and thus to further the progress, and increase the welfare of the Empire; to bring before the Government the scientific aspect of all matters affecting the national welfare; to promote and extend the application of scientific principles to industrial and general purposes; to promote scientific education and encourage the support of universities and other institutions, where the bounds of science are extended, or where new applications of science are devised.”

—Commissioner and Founder.—

The Organizing Commissioner (Mr. J. W. Hullett) thanked the Governor, the Chancellor of the University, the Railways Commissioner, the Under Treasurer, and the Secretary to the Commissioner of Public Works for assistance given in bringing the meeting to a successful beginning. Sir Samuel Way was voted to the chair. He expressed sympathy with the objects of the guild, and congratulated the founder of the branch (Mr. A. B. Moncrieff, C.M.G.) on the happy realization of an inspiration he received some months ago when in Queensland.

—Officers.—

Professor Stirling, C.M.G. was elected President of the branch, and other officers appointed were:—Vice-Presidents, the Premier, Minister of Education, Chancellor of the University, President of the School of Mines, President of the Board of Governors of the Public Library, President of the Royal Society, President of the South Australian Branch of the Royal Geographical Society, Railways Commissioner, Commissioner of Insolvency, Surveyor-General, Director of Education, Conservator of Forests, and the President of the Zoological and Acclimatization Society; General Committee, the officers, and Professors Chapman, Mitchell, and Rennie, Drs. W. T. Cooke, D. Mawson, and Pulleine, and Messrs. E. J. Bradley, E. V. Clark, J. Dalby, S. Dixon, G. F. Dodwell, H. W. Gartrell, T. Gill, A. J. Higgin, M. W. Holtze, W. Howchin, W. B. Poole, F. B. Rushton, W. Rutt, and Graham Stewart; Treasurer, Mr. B. S. Roach; Assistant Treasurer, Dr. A. J. Schulz; Secretary, Mr. J. W. Hullett; Assistant Secretary, Mr. A. W. Dunstone.

—The Governor's Address.—

His Excellency delivered a pointed address, and commended the objects of the guild, which, he said, although in sympathy with the objects of the Royal Society and British Association, was not identical in aim with any existing society. Its purpose was to stimulate appreciation of the value of scientific knowledge, and the advantages of employing the methods of scientific enquiry, and the study of cause and effect in affairs of every kind. Such methods were not less applicable to the problems which confronted the statesman, the official, the merchant, the manufacturer, and the school master, than to those of the chemist or biologist, and the value of a scientific education lay in the power which it gave to grasp and apply the principles of investigation employed in the laboratory to the problems which modern life presented in peace or war. Let them take the problem of Japan. The western world was wondering at the efficiency of both the navy and the army of Japan. What had really happened there was that for the past 30 years everybody, from the Emperor to the smallest boy and girl, had been taught to think. They had been dealing with things as well as words in their schools, and they represented at the present moment the maximum of efficiency

and brain power as the result of such treatment. Then there was the great relative advance of commerce and industry of Germany and the United States. Those were examples of countries having complete and numerous state-aided universities, and their national activities were carried on in the full light of modern science by men who had received a complete training. If the guild helped them to improve their own position in this respect it would not have been founded in vain. No one believed for a moment that science was able to create faith or charity, but the scientific study of economic conditions was capable of putting into the hands of the charitable the proper method of dealing with the poor and needy. After the Franco-Prussian war an eminent Frenchman said, “We have been defeated by the educated brain and scientific methods of those who contended against us.” It was not the victory of arms alone, but the victory of brain brought to bear upon the field of war. It was not the managers, employers, or capitalists only who must be trained, but the workers also. There were museums in Holland and Germany to show in working models every appliance devised by scientific men for the protection of life and limb in every industry, for the promotion of health, and for preventing accidents and danger to health from noxious vapours and accumulated dust. People were also shown there the best method for feeding children and how to build a house economically, and the farmer and manufacturer could go and get scientific advice of the best character. The British Science Guild was founded on an awakening of the national consciousness by the strain of foreign competition which pressed so heavily upon them in every walk of life and every market. Their competitions had derived exceptional strength from the superior development of their technical and educational system. The guild was supported by the most eminent men in every branch of life throughout the Empire. The great lesson which the nations of the British Empire had to learn appeared to be to recognise that mind dominated matter, and that no progress could be made without the faculty of organization. As Japan gained the victory over Russia by applying the science of war, so they required to gain their economic victory by applying science to industry. No industrial community could in these days retain its place unless it had the highest science at its disposal. That guild was a federated body and a patriotic institution. (Applause.)

—Fuller Recognition of Science.—

Professor Stirling gave an interesting and practical address on the aims and objects of the guild. A branch had already been formed in New South Wales, and others were being inaugurated in Queensland, Victoria, and Canada. He referred to the struggle for industrial supremacy, and the fact that the British race, which for many years held an undisputed lead, had seen the rise of formidable rivals in the United States, Germany, and Japan. He unhesitatingly asserted that for the most part the true explanation lay in a better appreciation and a more extended application to human efforts on the part of those nations of scientific principles and methods. If some British industries had failed to take root, or had relatively declined in comparison with what had happened in other lands, it was because as a rule the same interest and belief in the powers of science had not been manifested. The nation had failed, or had been slow to adopt, the newer or better methods which were at the root of the success of its competitors. One was unfortunately compelled to make that derogatory statement in spite of the fact that, so far as actual discovery or the efficiency of the human machine was concerned, the English race was second to none. Where it had often failed was in regard to the recognition of the importance and potentiality of a discovery, and in the apathy and want of appreciation which had allowed the opportunities of application and extension to be neglected. Thus it had been left to others to reap the tangible advantage that had subsequently accrued from the discovery. He believed that there had been some awakening of the national conscience in that respect; but much remained to be done. It must be recognised that success in every human pursuit depended first and chiefly upon science and scientific methods. In manufactures, mining, agriculture, the pastoral industry, education, the treatment of disease, the operations of war, the administration of charities, and even in the management of the humblest home, and in all the problems that face the politician, the social reformer, and the individual, the first essential of success was the adoption of scientific methods and the organization of scientific principles. (Applause.) As a matter of fact, science was nothing more or less than organized commonsense. In a dozen different directions a better knowledge and the application of scientific principles might be made to result in tangible benefit to South Australia, and to the in-