

Register 8/11/13

Register 11/11/13

UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS.

HIGHER SALARIES WANTED.

Several members of the professorial staff of the University of Melbourne who have been appointed to their present positions since 1903 have taken the opportunity of the reviewing of the finances of the university by the committee of enquiry and the termination in 1914 of the financial provisions of the University Act of 1904 to lay before the council of the University a convincing statement of the inadequacy of their salaries and of the financial provisions of their appointments generally. This complaint came before members of the council early in the week in the form of a letter, signed by the professors concerned; but, in consequence of the small attendance, consideration of the document was postponed. The letter states that, in connection with all professorial appointments made since 1903, the chair of botany excepted, part of the professor's salary is deducted to provide an endowment insurance policy, payable at death or the age of 60. The sum so deducted varies from £60 to £100. In both cases the capital value of the policy, or its equivalent, as an annuity, is, as a retiring pension, altogether inadequate. The amount insured not only varies with the premium, but with the age of the professor insured. At the age of 60 the council of the university has, very properly, the right to dispense with the services of any one of the professors concerned. In that event the professor would have the choice of accepting the accumulated value of the insurance policy or of taking an annuity till death. With a wife or family dependent upon him, he must select the former of these alternatives, and invest the total sum. In this case, with interest at the rate of 4 per cent., he would be in receipt of a retiring allowance of £46 per annum in the worst of the cases, and of £180 in the best. With no one dependent upon him, the individual would be appreciably better off with an annuity, which, in the same circumstances, would vary from £115 per annum to £400. In the former case the council would be face to face with the problem of either confronting the professor with comparative poverty or allowing him to stay in the service of the university when he might be no longer fit, with the inevitable result that the work of his department, the adequacy of the teaching, and the prestige of the university and the professor would all suffer.

In support of their case, the professors refer to the final report, published in 1904, of the royal commission which enquired into the affairs of the university. In that it was stated that it would be unwise to make the salaries of all university chairs of like amount. It recommended, however, that £900 per annum, with a house (equivalent to £1,000 per annum) be sufficient; and added that "certainly no less salary should be paid." The commission also expressed the opinion that, even with this minimum salary, it would not always be possible to command the services of the best men, or to retain the best men if secured. The university has adopted the first of these recommendations, viz., the inequality of salary, but not the second; and, as a result, the gross salaries of the professors concerned range from £750 per annum, with no endowment insurance policy, to £1,080, inclusive of such policy. The inadequacy of the endowment insurance policy as a retiring allowance leads most of the professors to take out another and private policy, thus still further reducing the salary.

The professors further contend that since the findings of the commission, the cost of living has undergone a very appreciable increase. Throughout Australia the average rates of wages have risen about 24 per cent. between 1901 and 1902, compensating for the increased cost of living in that period. On the more moderate estimate of 15 per cent. increase in the cost of living, the professors state that the purchasing power of a professorial net salary of £850 in 1904 is now worth only £630 per annum. If, on the other hand, the figures of the Federal Statistician, of over 20 per cent. increase, be taken as the basis, a salary of £800 in 1904 is to-day worth in purchasing power only £640. It is thus clear that the salary of a professor appointed in 1903, is in 1913, after 10 years' service, very much reduced, at the very time when his powers should be of increased value to the University.

It is necessary, the professors feel, to insist on the fact that the occupants of chairs in countries far removed from the great centres of learning should not only be encouraged, but should be actually compelled to visit other centres. It is, however, practically impossible for most of the professors to undertake such journeys in the interests of the university

on the half-salary which it has been proposed by the council should be the "normal" arrangement.

In concluding with the request that steps be taken to improve their financial position, the signatories to the letter make the following recommendations:—

1. That the salary recommended by the royal commission of 1904, viz., £900 per annum and house, or additional sum of £100 per annum for house allowance, be made the minimum salary for all professorial appointments.
2. That, in view of the rise in prices since the commission's report, not less than an additional £100 per annum be paid, as a premium for life insurance policies.
3. That on retirement, provided that 10 years' service has been rendered, a pension be granted, the yearly amount of which shall be calculated as a fraction of £1,000, taking the number of years of service as numerator and 60 as denominator.
4. That all new appointments be made subject to the statutes now in force, wherein provision is made for appointment for life, with a carefully guarded power of removal.
5. That leave of absence for a year be granted on full salary once in every seven years.
6. That if a professor leaves Australia for a long vacation before the end of the academic year, but after the cessation of lectures, or where arrangements approved by the council have been made, no salary be deducted.

Register 10/11/13

Mr. P. E. Correll, of the Adelaide University, a member of Dr. Mawson's Australasian Antarctic Expedition, who recently returned from the antarctic, will leave by the Melbourne express on Tuesday afternoon en route for Hobart, where he will join the staff of the relief expedition which will depart for the south in a few days' time. Mr. Correll will be accompanied by Mr. F. A. Robertson, of the University, who will assist with the erection on the Aurora of Mr. Correll's photochemical laboratory.

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By effluxion of time the following gentlemen have ceased to be members of the Council of the Adelaide University and are eligible for re-election:—Mr. Frederic Chapple, Rev. Canon Girdlestone, Mr. W. J. Isbister, Professor Rennie, and the Hon. F. W. Young. Mr. Chapple as warden and Mr. T. A. Caterer as clerk of the Senate will retire on November 26. The above offices will be filled at the meeting of the Senate on November 26.

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DR. MAWSON'S PARTY

THE RELIEF SHIP AURORA.

MELBOURNE, November 10.

In view of the departure of the Aurora to-morrow, in charge of Captain J. K. Davis to pick up Dr. Mawson's Antarctic party, the Governor-General, Lord Denman, inspected the vessel at noon to-day. After the inspection an adjournment was made to the saloon, where Lord Denman proposed the toast of success to the expedition and a safe return of the Mawson party.

AURORA'S VOYAGE.

DEPARTURE FROM MELBOURNE TO-DAY.

MELBOURNE, November 10.

Prior to his departure for the antarctic to-morrow to pick up Dr. Mawson's party, Capt. J. K. Davis received a visit from the Governor-General on board the Aurora to-day. The little vessel was lying at the dockyard pier, freshly painted and trimmed after the thorough overhaul given her during the last few weeks. His Excellency was accompanied by the Prime Minister (Mr. Cook) and the Governor of the Falkland Islands (Mr. Allardyce), and there were other visitors. After an inspection of the Aurora the party went below to the wardroom. There Lord Denman expressed the admiration all felt for the manner in which Capt. Davis had faced the difficulty of rescuing one party of the explorers at the expense of leaving another with Dr. Mawson behind. Although they had been able to keep in touch with Dr. Mawson by wireless, it was impossible to be free from anxiety on account of the brave leader and his companions. Lord Denman wished Capt. Davis a successful voyage, and a safe return for the whole party. Capt. Davis responded to His Excellency's good wishes, and assured him that all on board would do what they had always done—their duty.

The last of the stores were taken on the Aurora this evening, and the vessel will start on her long voyage at 10 o'clock to-morrow morning.