

ADVANCE GUARD OF SCIENCE

NEARLY FIVE HUNDRED WANT TO VISIT AUSTRALIA

IMMENSE SCIENTIFIC PICNIC PARTY

WHAT IS TO BE DONE BY THE VISITORS AND HOW.

"The idea is absurd," someone said—In fact, nearly everybody said when it was suggested some six or eight years ago that the British Association for the Advancement of Science should visit Australia in one of its annual peregrinations.

The absurd is about to happen, for on August 8 the members of the association will begin its Australian sessions in Adelaide.

Dr. A. C. D. Rivett (organising secretary of the association), who has just been in England for some months making arrangements at the headquarters of the association, has arrived in Australia, and intends consulting with the local officers in each centre which the association will visit.

He is quite enthusiastic over the prospects of a fine productive visit.

Nearly Five Hundred Applicants.

"There has been a most unexpectedly high interest taken in this Australian visit," he said in conversation with a "Daily Herald" reporter yesterday. "Applications made for inclusion in the party numbered 450, but we could not possibly handle these, and so the figure has been reduced to 370. Further reduction will be made if it is at all possible. It is rather a surprise that so many people can be found to give up so much time to travel over to this side of the world, and it speaks well for the great interest that is taken in Australian affairs. It would be invidious to mention individuals, who are coming, but in the list of the party are many names of the most eminent men of the universities of the British Island. A complete list will be made available for the press during the next few days. One cannot but feel the greatest gratification with the brilliant standing of the visitors.

An "Advance" Party.

"A small party of 70 will spend a week in Western Australia from July 28 to August 4, and they will then join the main party to come to Adelaide, the whole body of visitors being due to arrive here on August 8. The new Aberdeen liner Eurypidies, which is making her maiden voyage, and the Orient mail boat will convey most of the party—both boats are due the same day. Other members will come from the East via America. The full programme of the visitors will be made public in ample time.

Sir Oliver Lodge.

"The association will meet officially on three occasions. The first will be to hear the retiring president's address. Sir Oliver Lodge delivers that, and his name needs no introduction. For the second occasion the lecturer was to have been Professor G. C. Bourne, of Oxford, but as it is not certain that he will be able to leave England, that arrangement has had to lapse. The third big meeting has to do with the sectional activities of the association. For the purposes of its distinctly scientific work, the association is divided into 12 sections. At the first meeting in York in 1831 the association met in one body, but the day of the specialist has altered that, hence the sections. They are as under:—Section A, physical and mathematical science, including astronomy and meteorology; B, chemistry; C, geology; D, zoology; E, geography; F, economics and statistics; G, engineering; H, anthropology; I, physiology; K, botany; L, educational science; and M, agriculture.

Adelaide's Speciality.

"Each section has a president, who inaugurates its work with an address on the present position of his subject. The sections will not all meet in Adelaide, but two presidential addresses will be given here. Those selected are geography and agriculture. The former selection is happy for two reasons—first as a compliment to Sir Charles Lucas, formerly head of the Dominions Department of the Colonial Office, who first suggested the possibility of an Australian meeting. In the second place it is a compliment to Adelaide because of the superb contributions that have been made to geography by an Adelaide man—Dr. Mawson. It is unfortunate that Dr. Mawson cannot be here. His generosity in postponing his first public statement of the scientific results of his magnificent expedition till the meeting of the association is notable. It will make the scientific work of the association of a markedly Australian character. It was an Australian expedition, and one cannot but appreciate Dr. Mawson's generous resolve, for it entailed some sacrifice. The announcement of the results at the association's meetings will make an important feature of the distinctly Australian contributions to this meeting. Naturally one wishes that the announcement could be made in Adelaide. Dr. Mawson's time in England is so limited, however, that it would be false kindness to urge him to go short in order to be in Adelaide in the second week in August. The fortnight he gains by post-

poning his contributions till during the Sydney meeting is very important to him. Nevertheless one feels that Sir Charles Lucas, in his address, will make decided allusions to what, in the words spoken to me personally by Dr. W. S. Bruce, the leader of the famous Scottish Antarctic expedition, is 'the most valuable piece of work ever carried out in Antarctica.'

Agriculture.

"That the address on 'Agriculture' should be given in South Australia is obviously most appropriate. It will be given by Mr. A. D. Hall, M.A., F.R.S., till recently director of the Rothamsted Experimental Agriculture Station in England. Such an address should certainly come early in the meeting, for it will be heard with much interest and will cause comment. In addition a lecturer has been placed at the disposal of the Workers' Association for one evening. The arrangements for this meeting are entirely in the hands of the secretary of the body (Mr. T. Ryan). Professor Gonner, M.A., who is president of the section on economics and statistics, will be the lecturer.

Financial Aspect.

"I must not occupy time by speaking fully of the activities of the association, but I want to point out that all moneys which it receives in subscriptions are devoted to the promotion of scientific research. I do not doubt that the association will take up some Australian problems where it is here, and support work to that end. No money ever subscribed is spent on the annual meetings. That expense is always borne locally. Probably no better value is ever given for money than that which the British Association returns for its subscriptions in the shape of the results of its scientific research upon national problems. But to enable this to be done a large membership

ship is essential. The association, which it has a large fixed membership list, relies considerably upon securing a high local membership for the year of a particular meeting. Usually 600 to 2500 people join locally at an English meeting. No technical qualification is required for membership. For the Adelaide meeting special terms have been arranged. Full member who attend at Adelaide only may join for £1 and associate members for 10/. The chief difference between the two is that full members have the right of receiving free of cost the large annual report, which gives a complete account of the meeting, including the scientific papers read and the addresses given. I am anticipating that there will be a large membership in Adelaide.

Local Officials.

"Professor E. C. Stirling and Professor Kerr Grant are in full charge of local arrangements, and will attend to all enquiries. Mr. Thomas Gill, I.S.O., is the hon. treasurer, and the vice-presidents are the Governor, the Premier, the Mayor of Adelaide, and the chancellor of the University. Arrangements are now developing rapidly. The Government is giving its support. It is issuing a handbook containing articles by experts which will be a fine advertisement for the State. The task of editing this book is in the hands of the Hon. D. J. Gordon and Mr. V. H. Ryan. Facilities in regard to travelling have already been granted, and our first requests in this respect have had to be increased, for nobody dreamed that the visit to Australia would be so popular. At the most only 150 of the visitors are receiving any aid, and 225 are paying all their own overseas expenses.

Looking to the Governments.

"It is greatly to be hoped that all the Governments will see their way to offer the hospitality of the railways to the whole party without any distinction. South Africa did it in 1905 for a party of 380. Precedent is not everything, but to overlook it makes comparisons possible which we as Australians do not wish to hear. However, this matter will be considered at the forthcoming Premiers' Conference. We cannot provide hospitality privately for the whole party, nor is it necessary, but we do hope to do so for about 300. The committee has been energetically at work for some time seeking the necessary provision. The Lieutenant-Governor has this in hand.

Broken Hill To Be Visited.

"I have said nothing about the excursions which are proposed in South Australia. A subcommittee under Mr. Angus Parsons, M.P., is dealing with this. As the visitors have come to the country to see it, the work of that gentleman is very important. I might say in this regard it is not necessary for me to discuss details that through the generosity of Mr. G. D. Delprat and the Broken Hill Mining Managers' Association, a trip to the Barrier and to the Port Pirie works has already been arranged for a party of experts. But all these matters will be attended to in due time."