

Bould.

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Advertiser

MAR 1924

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...ence of a course of training begun ... ended between the handles of a plough. His plea is for the recognition of agriculture as a practical subject distinct from, although, in a measure, dependent upon, the sciences which have contributed to its elaboration, and are still contributing to its perfection. Roseworthy College must produce farmers, not agricultural scientists.

combine together to send an investigator to the University on research work. It would be necessary to give him a salary of something like £400 a year, with a specified term of labour, and they would have to provide about £250 a year for equipment. He was quite sure that if this were done valuable results would accrue. Such a scheme would have, he was sure, the ready co-operation of the teaching staff of the University. The Professor was heartily thanked for his address and advice.

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VALUE OF RESEARCH.

ROTARY CLUB DISCUSSION.

On Thursday, February 28, the members of the Rotary Club had the pleasure of listening, after their weekly luncheon, to an address by Professor T. Brailsford-Robertson on the functions of the University and its association with the community, in the direction of research. On that day there was but little time left for the discussion which usually follows an address, so it was decided that members should be given an opportunity to express an opinion on Thursday of this week on the questions that had been raised. There was a large attendance, presided over by Rotarian G. McEwin.

The particular portion of the professor's address to which attention was paid by the various speakers was that in which he had suggested that efforts should be made to bring the results of the research work at the University more rapidly into utilization in practical form, and that, with such object in view, there should be followed the American plan whereby manufacturers sent to the University investigators, who, under the title of fellows, entered thoroughly into scientific research concerning points of vast interest to their employers, and the work on which they were engaged. These investigators, he said, remained the employes of the manufacturers, were paid by them, and placed the results of the work at their disposal. Those men received all assistance from the scientific men attached to the University, and obtained the use of the valuable laboratory plant.

Rotarian J. R. Richardson, the City Engineer, suggested that it would be an excellent thing if the Adelaide City Council could see its way to permit one or two of its officials to undertake research work at the University on the lines indicated by the professor. At present so much of their time was naturally taken up with routine duties, that they could not pay attention to the realms of scientific research. There were vast avenues to explore, both in the engineering and the health departments of municipal work.

Rotarian S. Perry said he quite appreciated the value of the suggestions made by the professor, and if good would be achieved by the subscribing of funds, which would enable certain research work connected with manufacturing establishments to be undertaken by the scientists there, and that the results should be for the benefit of all the manufacturers concerned, he would be quite in accord with the establishment of a scheme to carry that idea into effect. He was strongly opposed to the sending abroad for a solution of the problems that were met with in the daily life of the community—such as, for instance, the utility of the brown coal deposit—for he was satisfied* that there were in South Australia men just as capable of dealing successfully with such scientific investigations as there were anywhere else in the world.

Rotarian L. Laybourne Smith pointed out that there were many important problems affecting the community as a whole which needed the kind of research work to which reference had been made, and he considered the idea of the manufacturers working in conjunction with the University on such matters an excellent one. In his particular profession there were two matters which would handsomely repay investigation. One was the best way to treat or deal with the white ant trouble, and the other how to cope with the salt damp question. It was quite possible that, in the thousands of technical works which reached the University each year, many methods were explained for dealing with the white ant problem, but it needed capable men to acquire the information contained therein, and distribute it in a form that would be easily understood.

In replying, Professor Brailsford-Robertson said he thoroughly approved of the suggestion of the City Engineer that opportunities should be afforded to officials of the City Council to combine with the University staff in research work on municipal problems. That body was just the one to lead in such a movement as was being discussed that day. Something should be done immediately to enable the community to get the benefit of the research work at the University, and to knit the practical with the theoretical. It would be well for all if the manufacturers of similar products in Adelaide were to

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ARTISAN VERSUS SCIENTIST.

Dr. F. S. Hone, when speaking at the weekly luncheon on Thursday of the Rotary Club, repeated the story which had been told by one of the professors of the university which showed the attractiveness of the artisan, as compared with the scientific, method of obtaining a livelihood. Some time ago a Bachelor of Science of the Adelaide University, who had been unable to obtain a position in which his scientific knowledge could be utilized, was seen by the professor, and was told that he knew of a post in scientific research which he was sure would suit him. "And what would be the salary?" enquired the graduate. "I would be about £275 a year," was the reply. "Oh, that would be no good to me," quickly rejoined his questioner, "I have been making £445 a year at bricklaying."

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News

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THE NEWS

ADELAIDE: THURSDAY, MARCH 6, 1924.

PUBLIC HEALTH

Every year a certain period seems to be marked out as the open season for colds. And the remarkable thing is that this belief is not a popular superstition, but a fact.

There are few individuals who do not suffer from colds or influenza at least once a year. Coughs, like flies in the summer and other uninvited guests, are always with us, yet nothing is done to remedy that state of affairs. These respiratory troubles are spoken of as "minor ailments," and comparatively little definite knowledge exists in regard to their real causes, distribution or manner of spread. Diseases with spectacular names may be more sudden and deadly in their effects, but they are confined, relatively, to a very small number of persons. But here are ailments anyone is liable to contract, which weaken the body and often bring about more serious diseases.

There is another important fact to be considered—the effect on industry. The proportion of lost time that is due to sickness is, as a rule, greatly under-estimated in factory records, and the proportion due to slackness over-estimated. Though no records are available, it is probable that the greater percentage of lost time due to sickness is caused through respiratory troubles, especially when the period of sick leave is of comparatively short duration.

In the United States this year a detailed study of common colds will be begun by the Public Health Service in co-operation with the following noted universities: Harvard, John Hopkins Medical School, Georgetown, Howard, Tulane, Ohio State, Chicago, and California. It is estimated that the research will extend over a period of two or three years.

Co-operation in, and facilities for, scientific research are features of the American system which might well be copied by Australia, especially in regard to the bristling problems of public health. Investigations into various diseases have, no doubt, been undertaken in Australia by private individuals, medical men mainly and Government officials, but there has been nothing like an organised attack on the world of germs.

There are six excellent universities in the Commonwealth. If all these worked in co-operation with public health bodies on some common subject of research, it is certain that many present health problems would not present so difficult an aspect. Nor would the fear of epidemics be so great, because there would exist a mechanism of investigation and prevention.

Australia needs co-operation in other lines than ensuring health, but nowhere is the need so great. Physical fitness is the basis of moral, industrial, and national progress. Why not take the pains to ensure it?

MANUFACTURE AND RESEARCH

University Training Required

ROTARIAN CLUB DISCUSSION

Following a lecture last week by Professor Brailsford Robertson, of the Adelaide University, a discussion on the need of manufacturers to further scientific research was held at the meeting of the Rotary Club today. Professor Robertson deprecated the fact that so many University graduates were forced to leave the State to obtain positions for which they had qualified.

Mr. J. R. Richardson (City Engineer), opening the discussion, declared that there was a great gap between theoretical discoveries in the University laboratories and their practical applications. He referred to the position in America, where a number of smaller firms had employes attached to the Universities as fellows. Their duty was to make scientific investigations relative to the business their employers. He thought that the practice might well be extended to the Australian Universities.

He instanced the case of the City Council, which, he said, could send a man to perform research work connected with engineering and health departments. At present all the officials were engaged fully on their routine work and could not devote the time to experimental work. If manufacturers fostered the scheme they would get the right results as their experimenters would have the valuable assistance of the University professors.

Mr. S. Perry stated that he was not clear whether Professor Robertson desired the manufacturers to provide their own experimenters at the University or whether the manufacturers should augment a fund for the performance of research work, the results of which could be applied to their industries. Mr. Perry did not think that it would be possible for firms in South Australia to follow the example set in America. The expense of keeping research workers at the Universities would be too great. He favored the idea that the manufacturers should contribute to a fund. There was certainly room for research work which should be assisted by business men.

Mr. L. Laybourne Smith paid a tribute to the broadness of the Adelaide University. He stated that although he left school when he was 14 he was able to get a degree. This could not be done at many Universities.

"Research work is chiefly a question of organisation," he declared. "Merchants and business men for their own monetary benefit should send men to the Universities. Something might be done with regard to the devastation caused by white ants. Salt damp also might be limited. At present we do not even know what it is, but I think that there should be scientific investigation. I don't know of any research work going on to remedy the white ant trouble."