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AUSTRALASIAN PARLIAMENT OF SCIENCE.

THE AUSTRALASIAN ASSOCIATION.

HISTORY OF THE MOVEMENT.

"If I let you off," continued Mr. MacDonald, "France and Italy and all my other debtors will claim the same privilege, and with France, in particular, my greatest lever is her debt to me. Last August I had to threaten to present the bill unless she did this or that—and she did it. A fat chance I have got of pushing this League of Nations baby through and of curbing France's militarism once I start cancelling debts. . . ."

Considering Russia's Claims

And so, more or less along such lines as these, the conference proceeded. On the recognition of at any rate some portion of Russia's debt to Great Britain Mr. Ramsay MacDonald was adamant. He was quite unmoved by the plea that Russia had abolished capital and could not be expected to take over the liabilities of the very government they had destroyed.

"Capital is capital and it has its rights," one can picture this surprising—and possibly surprised—Labor Prime Minister arguing. This far he was prepared to go—that as a set-off against the Russian war debt to Great Britain, amounting to £650,000,000, he was prepared to consider the damage done by and the cost to the Russian Government of the campaign against Kolchak and Denikin and Wrangel and the White Sea expedition. But that was all.

Details of the final agreement have not yet been received in Australia. All we know is that a loan was made, that a commercial treaty was negotiated, and that a limited recognition by Russia of the Russian debt to Great Britain was conceded. Beyond that the details are of interest to historians and traders, but not to the man in the street.

Irony of Circumstances

It is the irony of circumstances that it should fall to the first Labor Government of Great Britain to administer the lesson to the Communist Government of Russia that property is property, that debts are debts, and that the payment of debts is not altogether a matter to be debated on moral grounds or waived between friends. It is the irony of circumstances too that it should be negotiations with Russia in particular that should convince the Labor Government in Britain of the complexity of international affairs, and, in particular, international finance on the Continent of Europe.

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LAW STUDENTS' SOCIETY.

The University Law Students' Society met in the law lecture room, at the University on Friday. Mr. E. L. Bean was adjudicator.

The question for the evening read as follows:—Action by C against A Motor Company, Limited (a company registered under the Companies' Act 1892) for rescission of a contract to take shares and return of the purchase price on the ground of non-fulfilment of condition. At the trial the following facts were proved:—In August, 1913, the A Motor Company requested C in writing to take 10,000 £1 shares in the company. The company had not at that time commenced operations. C agreed to take the shares upon the express condition that the company should erect a factory at Croydon. The issue of the shares to C was duly authorised by the directors, but no formal allotment was made by notice of allotment. C's name was not entered on the register of members. Notice of meetings of shareholders, however, were sent to C, and C on two occasions filled in and deposited at the registered office of the company a form of proxy. In September, 1914, C completed payment in full for the shares; and share certificates were issued in respect of his shares and sent to him and were retained by him. At the end of 1917 the company had failed to erect the factory. C thereupon brought this action. It was admitted by C at the trial that he regarded himself as a member of the company between September, 1914, and the end of 1917. On motion for judgment.

Counsel for the company, Mr. E. C. Dunfield, with him Mr. A. L. Pickering. Counsel for C, Mr. P. J. Kelly, with him Mr. W. Donithorne. Counsel for C contended (1) That C never became a member of the company and there was no valid contract to take the shares; (2) that if there were a contract it was subject to a condition subsequent that the company should erect a factory at Croydon and there had been a breach of this condition, and this action brought within a reasonable time, the contract should be set aside.

Counsel for the company contended (1) That C became a member of the company and there was a valid contract; (2) that the condition was clearly severable and there was an absolute contract to take the shares; (3) that though there had been a breach of the condition subsequent this action must fail because C had been guilty of laches in not bringing his action within a reasonable time.

After an interval of 18 years Adelaide is again to be the seat of the bi-annual conference of the Australian Association for the Advancement of Science, the sessions of which will begin next Monday. In a few days the city will be invaded by an army of scientists from all over Australia and New Zealand, who will attend the deliberations connected with one or other sections of the conference, the object of whose work is outlined in the name given to the association by its founders—the advancement of science.

The association is the Australasian Parliament of Science, for it represents not only all the States and New Zealand, but also every department of scientific knowledge and research, and is organized on the lines of its prototype, the British Association. It was in that remarkable period of intellectual activity which marked the closing decades of the 18th and the early part of the 19th centuries, when most of our great philanthropic and scientific societies had their origin that the British Association for the Advancement of Science was founded.

The Beginning of Things.
The first of the bodies was the Royal Society for the Promotion of Natural Knowledge, which dates back as far as the middle of the 17th century, and is the oldest scientific society in existence. It was founded under royal patronage, and by charter of Charles I. In its early days it was overshadowed by outside influences, but later it became less under political influence, and more strictly governed by impartial scientific considerations. In 1878 the Linnean Society, which took its inspiration from the great Swedish naturalist Linnaeus, was founded for the study of botany and natural history. On the threshold of the 19th century the Royal Institution of Great Britain was established mainly for the purpose of the investigation and exposition of natural phenomena in the realms of physics, electricity, and chemistry. In 1807 came the formation of the Geological Society of London, which was founded by a few enthusiastic workers who were tired of the endless and acrid disputes which, at the beginning of last century, divided geologists into the opposing camps of Vulcanists and Neptunists, and who agreed to ignore theories and look for facts. The year 1830 ushered in the Royal Geographical Society, which was the outgrowth of the Raleigh Travelling Club, and which was founded for the purpose of encouraging geographical explorations and research. With the increasing specialization of scientific enquiry, other associations sprang into existence as the rallying centre of original workers along specific lines in the ever-widening field of observation, experiment, and ascertained results. Men of science were quick to realize that there was a unity in physical phenomena, and that each branch of research must seek the aid of the others in the correlation of truth and to ensure a harmony in its dicta. That sentiment prepared the way for the establishment of the British Association.

FOUNDATION OF PARENT ASSOCIATION.

It was the establishment of such an association in Germany in 1830 that suggested the idea to Sir David Brewster, who, in an article published in the Edinburgh Philosophical Journal—of which he was the editor—advocated the establishment of the British Association in England. It was the great energy and tact that Sir Roderick Murchison applied to the movement which made it succeed. He was at the time the president of the Geographical Society of London. When he first mooted the idea—following on Sir David Brewster's suggestion—even his scientific friends pooh-poohed it. Just when his scheme seemed doomed to fail the Rev. William Vernon-Harcourt, a son of the then Bishop of York, came to his assistance by proposing that the association should hold its first meeting at York, and by inducing his father to act as its first patron, and Earl Fitzwilliam as its first president. That historic gathering was held in 1831, and the attendance was 301. From that small beginning the British Association has grown to a membership of several thousands, and is now able to devote thousands of pounds a year to scientific research. Representatives of the parent body paid a visit to Australia in 1914, and conducted sittings in Adelaide just at the time war broke out. Its president was that world-famous scientist, Sir Oliver Lodge, and there were also present many other great men of science. Included in the number were two German professors, who deeply regretted that war had broken out between their country and England. They were later allowed to return to their own country and were not interned with other German subjects then in the Commonwealth.

THE AUSTRALIAN ASSOCIATION.

The Australian Association came into being in 1888, chiefly through the efforts of Professor A. Liversidge, who was president of the Sydney meeting in 1898 and was permanent secretary of the movement until 1921. Professor Liversidge, who passed through Adelaide a few weeks ago on his way to London, is Emeritus Professor of Chemistry at the Sydney University. The association was founded on the lines of the British Association, having for its objects:—"To give stronger stimulus and more systematic direction to scientific enquiry; to obtain a greater degree of national attention to the objects of science, and the removal of those disadvantages which impede its progress; and to permit the intercourse of the cultivators of science with one another and foreign philosophers." The limited number of towns which could give accommodation to so large a gathering, as well as the great distances which separate the chief centres of population in Australia, made it expedient to hold the conferences once every two years, instead of annually, as is the case with the British Association. The value of the association's conferences to Australia cannot be told in mere figures. It is extremely valuable in the British Isles, where a compact population and ready means of intercourse facilitate the transmission of ideas among scientists, and doubly so in Australia in view of the comparative isolation which the scientific workers of this continent have to contend with in pursuing their researches. In addition to the pleasure and stimulus which the members gain from personal intercourse, the valuable records of the proceedings of the meetings supply to the general public in a summarised form the latest observations and ascertained facts in every department of Australian science.

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Arrangements for Adelaide Conference.

The present is the third meeting of a conference in Adelaide. The first was held in 1893, when the late Professor Ralph Tate was the Chairman, and the second in 1907, when the President's chair was occupied by the late Dr. A. A. Howitt. This time Sir John Monash will direct the deliberations. Since the first meeting the conferences have been held bi-annually in the various cities of the Commonwealth and New Zealand, and on all occasions have been completely successful. No stone has been left unturned to ensure that the present congress will maintain the high standard. For a long time past the secretaries in the various States, headed by Mr. E. C. Andrew B.A., of the Sydney University—the permanent hon. general secretary—and Mr. L. Keith Ward, (Government Geologist and Director of Mines), the South Australian section have been working very hard, and their efforts should meet with success. As at present arranged, the programme is as follows:—

Monday, August 25.—Members and associate members register at the University in the morning. 12 noon.—Civic reception in the Adelaide Town Hall by the Lord Mayor. Afternoon.—Short excursions for those not attending meeting of the general council. General council meets at University. Evening.—Retiring President (Sir George Knibbs) inducts President-elect (Sir John Monash), and latter delivers his presidential address on "Power development."

Tuesday, August 26.—Sectional meetings at the University will commence with the delivery of presidential addresses in the morning in sections A (astronomy, mathematics, and physics); B, (chemistry); C (geology and mineralogy); H (engineering and architecture); I (sanitary science and hygiene); L (veterinary science); and M (botany). In the afternoon the presidential addresses will be delivered in sections D (zoology); E (geography and history); G (social and statistical science); and J (mental science and education). Afternoon, short excursions. Evening, reception by His Excellency the Governor (Sir Tom Bridges) at Government House.

Wednesday.—Morning.—Sectional meetings at the University will be continued, and presidential addresses be given in subsection B (pharmacy), and sections F (ethnology and anthropology); and K (agriculture and forestry). At the same session there will be a joint meeting of the astronomy, mathematic and physics, and

the chemistry sections to discuss "Valence and the theory of atomic structure." Afternoon.—Further meetings of sections and excursions. Evening.—Mr. E. T. Fisk will deliver a public lecture on "Recent developments in wireless communication" in the Town Hall.

Thursday, August 28.—Morning.—Sectional meetings at the University continued. At this session there will be a joint meeting of the geology and mineralogy, zoology, geography and history, and botany sections to discuss "The problems of the Great Barrier Reef and the progress of investigation." The President of the association (Sir John Monash) will give a reception in the Town Hall in the afternoon. Evening.—Free.

Friday, August 29.—Section meetings at the University will be continued in the morning. At this session there will be a joint meeting of the chemistry and engineering and architecture sections to discuss "The influence of small quantities of impurities on the physical properties of metals." The Lord Mayor will be at home to members of the association in the Town Hall in the afternoon. In the evening Capt. G. H. Pitt Rivers will deliver a public lecture on "Vanishing races" in the Town Hall.

Saturday, August 30.—The general council will meet in the morning, and weekend excursions will start.

In addition to the lectures mentioned Sir James Barrett will deliver a lecture, accompanied by descriptive cinema films on "Venereal diseases" at the Adelaide Town Hall on Thursday night. The lecture will be under the auspices of the S.A. branch of the Public Health Association of Australia.

The Officers.

The officers of the association are:—Patrons, His Excellency the Governor-General Lord Forster; the Governor-General of New Zealand (Lord Jellicoe), and Sir Tom Bridges (Governor of South Australia); Retiring President, Sir George Knibbs; President, Sir John Monash; Vice-Presidents, Professor A. Liversidge, Sir T. W. E. David, Sir William Bragg, Sir David Orme Masson, and Sir W. Baldwin Spencer; Hon. General Treasurer, Mr. David Carment; Hon. Permanent General Secretary, Mr. E. C. Andrews; Hon. Secretary for Adelaide meeting, Mr. L. Keith Ward; Hon. Treasurer for Adelaide meeting, Mr. B. S. Roach.

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THE HOSPITAL KIOSK.

A Generous Offer.

Plans to Be Prepared.

Recently the Chief Secretary (Hon. J. Jelley) stated that an anonymous donor had offered to provide, on certain conditions, the £2,500 required for the erection of a kiosk at the Adelaide Hospital in connection with the scheme of the voluntary auxiliary committee to supply linen and comforts for the patients, visitors, and staff. On Monday it was disclosed that the sum was forthcoming through Mr. A. A. Simpson, C.M.G., from the joint estate of two ladies.

Mr. Jelley added that he would instruct the Architect-in-Chief to prepare a detailed plan that would meet with the approval of Lady Moulden (who has the scheme in hand) and Dr. B. H. Morris (Inspector-General of Hospitals). When the plan was drawn up the Architect-in-Chief and Lady Moulden would be free to decide the matter of letting the contract for the completion of the kiosk.

Terms of the Gift.

The letter from Mr. Simpson to the Chief Secretary stated:—"I write to confirm my verbal offer. In the event of the Supreme Court agreeing to the arrangement made between the University authorities and the executors of the estate of the late Miss A. F. Keith Sheridan, my co-executor (Hon. Hermann Homburg) and I will pay the Government the sum of £2,500 for the Adelaide Hospital, which will be available for building the kiosk to carry on Lady Moulden's good work. Subject to the requisite authority being granted, I believe I shall be able to pay the money in about three months' time. I have to thank you also for your intimation that when the kiosk is completed a bronze tablet will be erected in memory of the two ladies from whose joint estate the money is derived.—Yours faithfully, A. A. Simpson."