

COMMERCE AND BUSINESS

As compared with movements in... had given a measure of price movement... which agreed very closely with the index number of prices as given by the Commonwealth Statistician.

Importance of Economic Research.

Recent economic investigation has shown that business fluctuations do not occur in haphazard fashion, but are due largely to the economic system itself, that they may be forecast with a high degree of certainty, and that they may be controlled in such a way as to eliminate their worst evils.

This is the view put forward by Professor D. B. Copland, the occupant of the Chair of Commerce in the University of Melbourne. Under the title "Commerce and Business," Macmillan & Co., in association with the Melbourne University Press, have published his inaugural address, which contains much more than matters of mere academic interest and deals with important questions relating to everyday business affairs in a practical manner. He discusses with freshness and freedom the relation between the study of commerce and business and illustrates by means of many examples the manner of application of the former to the problems and perplexities of the latter. In his opening remarks the lecturer points out that it is unnecessary for him to make out a case for the study of commerce, but hails with gratification the fact that the Chair of Commerce was established largely through the initiative of those in the business world. Practical men, he declares, should know much better than any others the difficulties of modern commerce and the need for careful study. Commercial education is likely to be much more successful if it spring from the needs of industry, and is supported by business men. What is the real relation between theory and practice? Is the so-called practical man justified when he taunts the inexperienced with being too theoretical, and dismisses a proposal because it is of mere academic interest? On the other hand, is the theorist right when he says that undue attention to practical details is likely to obscure one's vision and hold one fast to a deadening routine? There is much to be said for both points of view, but it is the height of folly to indulge in controversy over them. Such a controversy ignores the true relation between science and practical affairs. Very often the taunt that a certain proposal is theoretical is due to sheer inertia or lack of vision on the part of those in a position to adopt it. Important truths may thus lie unused for years, because, as Disraeli said, "the practical man is one who practises the errors of his ancestors." The study of commerce should be valuable for its "fruit-bearing" qualities. Unless it were able to add to the efficiency of business, to suggest means for the more economical handling of the nation's affairs, to provide for man's ultimate mastery over the economic organization by which he gains a livelihood, the study of commerce must remain ineffective.

Sound Training Necessary.

Experience, the lecturer continued, in this world of specialization was necessarily restricted, and many of the problems of business management required a broad general knowledge of the economic system as well as a rigorous mental training. University courses in commerce would provide a general education, a sound training in economics, and specialized studies dealing with the internal technique of business organization. Economics naturally occupied a prominent place in the scheme of study, and it was necessary to indicate the special reasons for studying the subject. A wide survey of economic organization was essential for a clear understanding of the great problem of adjusting the external relations of business to business, and of industry to the community as a whole. It was not sufficient to train industrial or commercial experts who were not fully seized with the importance of these external problems. A sound training in economics would prove a most valuable aid in this respect.

Price Movements.

It was commonly but erroneously thought that economics was indefinite in its subject matter and vague in its conclusions. In recent years there has been striking developments in the methods of formulating economic laws, and there was general agreement upon many phases of economic study which had hitherto seemed indefinite. Statistical methods in particular had greatly improved, and the facilities for the collecting and interpretation of statistics were very much greater. It was now possible to test conclusions in the light of experience, and to use statistics for the enunciation of economic law. This might be illustrated by reference to the causes of movements in the general level of prices. Some years ago he had investigated the problem in Australia, and had found that the quantity theory of money was fully supported in the actual developments. This theory stated that the price level varied according to the ratio between currency on the one hand and trade on the other. An elaborate investigation into the movements of prices...

Business Fluctuations.

He then discusses the problem of business fluctuations, and shows by a series of graphs the periodic movements of prosperity and depression, which cause social and economic difficulties. He said that these periods were not of regular length, and recent investigations by the Harvard University suggested that they were very much shorter than was commonly believed. There were four divisions within the trade cycle. Steady recovery and healthy business; great prosperity leading to a boom; the process of deflation and liquidation; and a period of stagnation. These periods might be lengthened by the intervention of unexpected forces, such as industrial strife and international crises, but it was possible to measure accurately the actual movement in business conditions at any moment. This was being done successfully by the Harvard University and the London and Cambridge Universities, and their results were of great interest. There were three main factors—speculation, business, and money. Speculation began some time before movements in business, and business again preceded money. If money and speculation were moving in opposite directions an important change in business would follow. Thus if speculation were falling off the money rates rising, business would suffer. He had conducted an investigation into these three factors in Australia by taking industrial stocks and bank clearings as a measure of speculation; imports and wholesale prices as a measure of business; and the net yield of the Commonwealth war loan as a measure of money rates. The resulting chart confirmed the experience gained in England and America. During the boom and crisis of 1920-21, speculation rose rapidly until March, 1920, and was followed by a heavy decline, which was followed by a decline in business in September, 1920, while money rates did not turn until March, 1921. With speculation falling and money rates rising during 1920, a serious decline in business was inevitable. From the charts it might be possible to foresee the trend of business, but more study was necessary, and a scientific investigation of the problems concerned was required.

Further Research.

Business was not the only field upon which research was necessary, and he contemplated developing three special lines—commerce and business economics, labour and industrial relations, and public and business administration. He outlined the special problems to be investigated, but pointed out that the resources of the University were not sufficient for adequate development. At a time when research in other sciences was being supported by public authorities it would surely be possible to gain support for research into economic conditions, and he suggested the provision by the Commonwealth Statistician, in conjunction with the University, a service of information along the lines of the cycle chart which he had explained. There could be little doubt of its value, and the Commonwealth Ministry should be urged to establish a bureau of economic research.

Reg. 25-6-25

UNIVERSITY EDUCATION.

NEW ZEALAND COMMISSION.

WELLINGTON (N.Z.), Wednesday.

The Royal Commission upon University Education in New Zealand, consisting of Sir Harry Reichel (Wales) and Mr. F. Tate, C.M.G., (Director of Education, Victoria), began its sittings to-day.

In a statement submitted to the commission, Sir Robert Stout criticises the composition of the commission, and expresses surprise that New Zealanders were not appointed. He considers that the members chosen too strongly favour the accrediting system, and concludes by declaring that he does not think the present commission will be of any value to University education in New Zealand.

Professor Macmillan Brown (Chancellor of the University), in a statement submitted to the commission, criticises the suggestion of substituting four Universities for the present system. He considers there is no possibility of doing away with examination for matriculation and entrance scholarships, and any partial curtailment of it, such as is proposed in the accrediting system will, he fears, increase the difficulties instead of lessening them.

The Darling Building. The medical school, owing to its rapid growth, had been quite inadequately accommodated in the University buildings on North terrace, but owing to the generosity of the family of the late Mr. John Darling, a large new building, called the Darling Building, has been erected and is now occupied by the professors of pathology and physiology with their several lecture rooms, students' rooms, and so forth. The medical library has also been provided for in a finely proportioned room. At the Adelaide Hospital, which is only a few hundred yards from the University, several alterations and additions have been made, and there is in course of construction a large building in front of the present main entrance which is to provide accommodation for the resident medical staff and the administrative department of the hospital. The number of resident medical officers at the present time is 12, besides a medical superintendent. The registrar also resides in the hospital.

The Adelaide Hospital.

For some years the honorary medical staff have been anxious to have residential quarters provided for casualty dressers and at last the board have arranged so that two dressers can reside in the hospital. When the new block is finished, there will be room for more. As soon as this building is completed a new out-patient department is to be started, and better and larger accommodation provided for the casualty room. These two departments are worked under extreme difficulties, the accommodation being entirely inadequate and antiquated.

For a long time the University and the honorary medical staff have been anxious that better facilities for the teaching of obstetrics and gynaecology should be provided at the Adelaide Hospital. They deprecate any makeshift arrangement such as the alteration of any of the existing buildings into maternity wards, as a waste of money and not in the best interests of the public, and urge that a new building should be erected either on Frome road, between the hospital and the dental hospital, or in the old Exhibition ground. The matter is an urgent one and the medical school should not be compelled to wait some years before it is finalized.

The biochemical department is in course of rearrangement, and with the small laboratories adjacent to the wards the work will be carried on more efficiently in every way.

Children's Hospital and Queen's Home.

At the Children's Hospital in North Adelaide there are two resident medical officers, and when the new out-patient building, for which tenders have just been called, is finished, there will be provision for more. The University students have to attend in the wards and out-patient rooms for three months and also courses of clinical lectures on the medical and surgical diseases of children.

The Queen's Home is situated in Rose Park. There the students attend their maternity cases and receive tutorial instruction. There is one resident medical officer and two or three students can reside there during their period on duty. There is a pre-maternity clinic attached to the out-patient department at the Adelaide Hospital. Clinical instruction in mental diseases is given at the Mental Hospital, Parkside.

REGISTER 25-6-25

SCHOOL OF FORESTRY.

Negotiations for Continuance.

Professor Corbin is to remain at the Adelaide School of Forestry until the end of this year.

The question of a forestry school for the whole of Australia has been a subject of negotiation between the authorities of the Adelaide University and the Commonwealth Government for some time. Nothing definite has been decided yet, but the school of forestry at the Adelaide University will not be closed this year.

The Vice-Chancellor of the University (Professor Mitchell) stated on Wednesday that the University of New Zealand, at the request of the Adelaide University, had permitted Mr. H. H. Corbin to remain in this State until the completion of this year's work at the school of forestry. The future of the school was being considered in conjunction with the Commonwealth authorities. Last year three resolutions were passed in connection with the higher teaching of forestry in Australia, one by the Inter-Universities' Conference in Adelaide, another by the Association for the Advancement of Science in Adelaide, and the third by the Forestry Conference in Sydney. All recommended to the Federal Government the establishment of a central school of forestry, and the first that it should be at the Adelaide University. The Federal Government had taken up that question, but there had been no decision yet.

Mr. H. B. Woolcock responded, and while acknowledging the value of the industrial chemist to the community at large, stressed the fact that the foundations laid by the pure chemist, working in his laboratory on a small scale, were those upon which the industrial chemist had to build. The success and development of industrial chemistry, therefore, vitally depended upon the research work carried out in the schools and laboratories, where the basis of all industrial work was laid.

The Chairman proposed the health of the hon. secretary (Colonel Shaw), and eulogised the work he had done for the institute. He offered their congratulations on his recent promotion to the rank of colonel.

REGISTER 24.6.25

THE MEDICAL SCHOOL OF THE UNIVERSITY.

The following account of the Medical School of the University of Adelaide was prepared by special request by the Dean of the Faculty of Medicine for the Medical Journal of Australia of June 22:—

Although the University of Adelaide was established by Act of Parliament in the year 1874, it was not until 1876 that the academic work was commenced, the number of matriculated students being eight and of non-graduating students attending lectures 52. Next year then, 1926, will be the fiftieth year of its existence and the Council have decided to celebrate the jubilee of the University of Adelaide in August, 1926. The late Sir Edward Charles Stirling, F.R.S., may be regarded as the founder of the School of Medicine. He was appointed Lecturer in Physiology, Sir Thomas Elder having given £10,000 to endow the lectureship. In 1884 the school was formerly opened with Professor Watson, Professor of Anatomy; Professor Rennie, Professor of Chemistry; and Sir E. C. Stirling, Lecturer in Physiology. At the present time Sir George J. R. Murray, K.C.M.G., Lieutenant-Governor and Chief Justice of South Australia, is the Chancellor; Professor William Mitchell, M.A., D.Sc., is Vice-Chancellor; Dr. H. Swift is Dean of the Faculty of Medicine; Mr. F. W. Eardley, B.A., A.I.A.S.A., is the Registrar.

Personnel of the Staff.

During the last few years there have been some changes in the personnel of the staff. Dr. Swift having had to retire from the staff of the Adelaide Hospital owing to the age limit, considered it his duty to give up the Lectureship in Medicine also in 1923, and Dr. de Crespigny was appointed in his place. Drs. Hone and Kay were elected lecturers in clinical medicine. The late Dr. Benjamin Poulton retired from the Lectureship in Surgery after holding the office for 30 years, and Dr. Cavanagh Mainwaring was selected to fill the position, Messrs. H. S. Newland, C.M.G., O.B.E., F.R.C.S., and Bronte Smeaton, M.B., B.S., being the lecturers in clinical surgery. In 1921 Dr. J. A. G. Hamilton retired from the Dr. E. Willis Way Lectureship in Gynaecology, and Dr. T. G. Wilson was appointed in his stead. In 1924 it was thought wise to place obstetrics and gynaecology under the same lecturer, and so Dr. Wilson lectures on both subjects, Dr. Lendon having made the way by resigning from the Lectureship in Obstetrics in 1923, having held the post since the death of Dr. Way in 1901. Drs. Hamilton and Lendon have been appointed lecturers (honoris causa) for their long and valued services to the medical school. Dr. W. T. Hayward, C.M.G., LL.D., retired from the Lectureship on Materia Medica and Therapeutics in 1920, and Dr. H. K. Fry was appointed to the position. Dr. Hayward had held the position for nearly 20 years, having succeeded Dr. Cleland, and the Council of the University very fittingly rewarded him for his lengthy period of faithful service by making him a lecturer (honoris causa). In 1920 it was considered that more attention should be paid to public health and preventive medicine, and a course of lectures and demonstrations was added to the schedules, and Dr. F. S. Hone was appointed lecturer.

Munificent Bequests.

In 1922 Mrs. Marks bequeathed £50,000 to the medical school; part of the income from this splendid bequest has been allotted to the chair of pathology, which is now called the Marks Professorship of Pathology. The professor relinquishes the position of Director of the Laboratory at the Adelaide Hospital and so is enabled to give his whole time to the teaching of pathology. The remaining part of the income is to be earmarked for the purpose of providing more efficient teaching in the department of obstetrics and gynaecology. Mrs. Simpson and Miss Keith Sheridan also bequeathed the very handsome sum of £20,000 to the medical school for the purpose of medical research. Part of the income from this fund has been allotted to form part of the salary of a Marks Lecturer in Applied Physiology and research and part will be allocated to the salary of a Sheridan Research Fellowship in Medicine.