

# HAS NO VERBAL MEMORY

£90,000 CUT

## Sir Charles Martin A Study for Psychologists

### Money for Scientific Research Reduced

MELBOURNE, Today.

Primary producers, agricultural bodies, and many industrial interests, as well as scientific investigators, view with dismay the Federal Government's cut of £90,000 in expenditure on the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research for the year. The general opinion is that the saving effected cannot possibly be justified, because the economic loss to Australia resulting from the curtailment of the work of the council may run into hundreds of thousands of pounds actually the sum is incalculable.

Prof. Agar (president of the professional board at Melbourne University) said today that the money spent on the council had already been repaid a thousand times, and it would be a great pity to hamper its work of the extermination of diseases in plant and animal life, and of increasing production.

The abandonment of any researches on the ground that they did not produce quick results, he said, would be false economy. Often the work of generations was necessary before important results were obtained. Similar institutions were being maintained with success by all important countries overseas.

### WHAT RESEARCH VOTE CUT MAY MEAN

#### Effect on Food Products Transport

Melbourne, May 18.

Although officers of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research were disinclined today to discuss the decision of the Federal Ministry to reduce the expenditure of the council this year by £90,000, it was learned that was said today, would be the abandonment of all plans prepared by the council for the extension of its activities. It is understood that further reductions in the expenditure of the council are being considered by the Ministry.

The most important effect of the reduction in expenditure at present, it was said today would be the abandonment of plans for the establishment of a food preservation and transportation division. For some time the council has been anxious to devise improved methods of transporting Australian food products, particularly fruit for marketing. It is considered that as the Australian fruit crop greatly exceeds the requirements of the home market, improvements in methods of transportation which will facilitate the marketing of the surplus abroad would be of the utmost value to the fruit-growing industry. Plans for the establishment of a forests products laboratory and for the extension of the work on animal nutrition, entomology, and other subjects under study, have been abandoned also.

### VIRGIL'S WORK

Lecturing on Virgil, at the last meeting of the South Australian Poetry Society, Professor Fitzherbert, Professor of Classics at the Adelaide University, said the poet was first a soldier in Caesar's legions. His health was ruined in the campaign of Pharsalia. He then joined Siro's Epicurean School at Naples, and spent the rest of his life in that district. He was 28 before he published any poetry—brief pastoral sketches. Within the next few years he produced the four books of Georgics—a treatise on farming, written in polished poetry. The Georgics had the aim to turn the Romans back to the land. The Aeneid, Virgil's most famous work, was written later.

### Professor Watson

THE attorney of our old friend, Professor Watson, writes:—"Dear Rufus—Re your par. in today's 'Advertiser.' It may interest your readers to know that Professor Watson is now quite well again, and staying with a brother at Kew. Undaunted by his burden of years, he contemplates a trip to Adelaide, via Queensland, Wyndham, &c., and speaks of reaching here in the spring."

"The boy stood on the—"

Charles Martin got so far—and stopped.

That was 60 years ago, and he has got no farther, although the little boy who faltered in that far away English country school is now Sir Charles Martin, C.M.G., M.B., D.Sc., F.R.C.P., M.D., D.C.L., K.B., and Medallist of the Royal Society!

Adelaide's new chief of the Animal Nutrition Division of the Council of Industrial and Scientific Research, does not even know the number of his car, and must look in the directory every time he telephones his home!

His memory is a study for the psychologist.

WE have all heard of the absent-minded professor who put the cat to bed and put himself out—but Sir Charles Martin is the first of his kind we have met in the flesh.

His memory is unusual. He can carry an abnormal amount of data in that internationally famous brain—but he has no verbal memory. He has never yet been able to memorise a verse of poetry, or to play the simplest part!

In undergraduate theatricals he was always unpopular with his fellow-artists, for he had to "gag" all his lines.

One of the most brilliant men South Australia has known is the gaunt personality now sorting the threads cut short at the nutrition laboratory in Victoria Drive by the death of Prof. T. Brailsford Robertson.

Well over six feet tall, slightly stooped, with a high-domed head, keen eyes, and a measured voice, he looks the man of science.

But he owns to a fondness for tales with plenty of action in them, a happy ending with virtue always triumphant.

And in spite of honors crowded on him by several universities he refuses to discuss his achievements as anything more than small cogs in a vast machine.

Even for his 30 years as director of the great Lister Institute in London—founded in emulation of the Pasteur of France—he professes to find no cause for self-congratulation. "The scientist's joy is in the hunt—not in the brush," he says.

And he insists that the Medal of the Royal Society was conferred on him "out of friendship"—although officially for his treatise on thermal adjustment in animals.

His youth in England was undistinguished, until he went to King's College, London, where, freed from the necessity of learning by rote, his scientific gifts were allowed full play. After graduating at London University he went to Leipzig, where he did post-graduate work under Karl Ludwig, the most brilliant pathologist of his day, and later in Paris.

England was backward in pathological and physiological study in those days. That was only 10 years after the Anatomy Act had been passed. Before then medical students had to resort to the ugly business of "body snatching" until the too-enterprising Burke and Hare brought it into complete disrepute. In those days, too, vivisection was struggling against a wave of humanitarianism that threatened to make this most necessary process an impossibility, in fox-hunting England at any rate.

Commenting on this vexed question, Sir Charles observed that vivisection was misrepresented. "A section of the public seems to think that the vivisectionist flays animals alive—whereas most of the vivisection is done under an anaesthetic, and the subject is generally dispatched before it comes out of the ether."

Although he claims a scientific callousness, he admits that the first time he saw an operation he was "properly shot." The colloquialism came queerly from the scientist, but it somehow emphasized the essential humanness of the man.



SIR CHARLES MARTIN

The scientist and the man both prompted his war service; the scientist sent him as pathologist to the 3rd Australian General Hospital at Gallipoli—but it was the man who sent Major—afterward Colonel—Charles Martin into the firing line, although his official work lay far away.

He was more than 50 years of age then.

"I was put upon all sorts of committees, but I thought I would be more useful with the army (everyone wanted to get a gun and shoot someone in those days), so I went out," was his deprecatory remark.

Since he was 24 years of age he has been associated with Australia. He went to Sydney University as assistant professor of pathology, and inaugurated research work on snakes. Weight for weight, Australian snakes, by the way, are the most poisonous in the world.

Some years later, when occupying the chair of physiology at Melbourne University, Prof. Charles Martin was struck by the imaginative brilliance of papers sent in for examination by a student. "Extraordinary!" was the verdict. That student was later Prof. T. Brailsford Robertson, and the man who examined him is sitting in his chair in Adelaide.

A fantastic trick to play on scientists!

"Robertson had a great reputation as bio-chemist in both America and Europe, and his theories challenged scientists all over the world," he remarked. "His death was a tragedy."

Sir Charles during his recent tour of the pastoral districts was impressed by the keenness of pastoralists in scientific research, and also by the excellence of celebrated stud flocks which he inspected.

He is now engaged in co-ordinating the work of his several departments and planning operations for the future.

"Curiosity is what the scientific man wants more than anything—the curiosity of a little child before it is stifled by alleged 'good form,'" he said.

"That, of course, must be backed by scientific attainments, but without this divine curiosity, this demand to know 'why the wheels go round,' progress cannot be made. Then there must be infinite patience, and strength to stand rebuffs and disappointments."

This quality has apparently been inherited by a daughter, who graduated in science at Cambridge, and investigated foot-and-mouth disease. Sir Charles has a whole-hearted admiration for women's contributions to science.

"Two of my most distinguished colleagues at Lister Institute were women," he said.

But—he thinks it only right that his daughter should have dropped her research when she married and Sir Charles' grandchildren were born.

"Afterward, perhaps," he added: "but in the early days of married life a woman cannot successfully blend home and laboratory."

Prof. T. Harvey Johnston was elected at a meeting of the University of Adelaide late yesterday afternoon to represent the University on the board of governors of the Public Library Museum, and Art Gallery.