News 10-6-33

WHEAT PROBLEMS DISCUSSED

Prof. Prescott at Science Congress

VANCOUVER, June 9.

Prof. J. A. Prescott, of the Waite Institute, Adelaide, speaking at the Science Congress, discussed the conditions that existed in the wheat-belt of Australia and the problems of nitrogen supply for the fertilisation of crops.

Prof. Prescott

Describing the work of all the Australian observatories, Mr. W. B. Rimmer, of Canberra, told the congress of co-operation with stations in Java in the study of selected stars.

Mr. I. S. Palmer, of the United States Biological Survey, urged greater co-operation and more extensive legislative protection of the birds of the Pacific Ocean. He pointed out that knowledge of birds had advanced greatly, but said that observers on the Pacific Coasts of the United States Canada, Australia, and Japan were too few and too widely separated.

News 12-6-33

NEW BUILDING AT UNIVERSITY

£28,000 Laboratory Opened

FINE APPOINTMENTS

The Johnson Chemical Laboratories, which cost about £28,000 to build, were opened this afternoon by Mr. Justice Angas Parsons. They are situated in the north-west portion of the University grounds.

The erection of the laboratories was made possible through an endowment by the late Capt. Ronald Lindsay Johnson, and they have been named after him. Capt. Johnson, who was a grand-nephew of John Howard Angas, who founded the Angas chair of chemistry at the University, was killed in action in the great war.

The main lecture theatre of the new laboratory as been named "The Rennie lecture theatre" in honor of the memory of the late Prof. Edward Henry Rennie, who occupied the Angas Chair of Chemistry from its inception in 1927. A bronze tablet on the western wall of the theatre was unveiled after the opening ceremony.

The new laboratories are probably the most up to date in Australia. A double system of ventilation has been installed, supplying both fresh air to the rooms occupied by large classes and removing obnoxious and poisonous gases from the various laboratories.

Eight synchronous electric clocks are distributed throughout the laboratories and lecture rooms. Some of these are detachable, and for the convenience of certain work, may be plugged in any suitable point.

The building consists of a basement, ground floor, first floor, and attic. The total dimensions are 200 ft. by 74 ft.

Adv. 13-6-33

NEW LABORATORY OPENED

Chemistry Instruction Abreast Of Times

"STILL ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT"

Although the opening of the Johnson chemical laboratories at the Adelaide University places the teaching facilities in the chemistry department abreast of the best in Australia, if not the Empire, Professor A. K. Macbeth, who occupies the chair of chemistry at the University, said at the opening ceremony yesterday that there is still much room for extension and improvement.

Professor Macbeth pointed out that there was ample provision in South Australia for applied research, the Waite and Sheridan Institutes being prominent and successful centres in Australian applied chemistry research work, but facilities for pure research at the Adelaide University compared unfavorably with other Universities of Australia. Melbourne University, for instance, was allowed £300 to spend solely in experimental equipment and material.

"Probably the reason for the neglect to supply adequate provision for pure research," said Professor Macbeth, "is that it does not return immediate dividends, and so it does not have the direct appeal of applied research. Yet applied research depends solely on pure research."

He expressed the hope that an endowment for pure research would be placed at the disposal of the University Council so that lecturers could purchase materials and equipment, and so that post-graduate scholarships could be awarded.

"Universities engaged solely in teaching are only a glorified secondary school," he said. "Adelaide is not in that position, but I would like to see it even further removed from it. Perhaps it is an old man's dream, but I have visions of Adelaide University becoming something like that of St. Andrew's in Scotland. Though that city has a population of only 8,000, its University has an international reputation for its research work."

Commemorate War Hero

The Johnson chemical laboratories commemorate Captain Ronald Lindsay Johnson, of the Royal Field Artillery, who was killed in action in May, 1917. The erection of the laboratories was made possible by an endowment made by him.

In opening the building yesterday, the Warden of the Senate (Mr. Justice Angas Parsons) briefly outlined the life of Captain Johnson, who was born in England in 1889, and was educated at Eton and at Cambridge, where he took an honors degree in classics. He came to Australia in 1912 in connection with his father's business, of which he later became managing director in England. He was a grand-nephew of Mr. J. H. Angas, who founded the Angas Chair of Chemistry in the Adelaide University.

His Honor said interest in university work was a characteristic of the Johnson family, and it was most fitting that the endowment should be made for the advancement of chemistry. Captain Johnson had made his will, under which the University benefited, on being invalided home from France. He subsequently returned to the front and was killed. Professor Macbeth had materially assisted in planning and designing the building, its laboratories and fittings generally, and, instead of having one of the worst chemical laboratories in Australia, Adelaide University now had one of the best.

Chemistry, said his Honor, was the foundation science in medicine, pharmacy, dentistry, engineering, and agriculture. There were already 335 students at work in the laboratories, and 92 in the pharmacy department.

Professor R. W. Chapman, who is the oldest officer on the University staff, and was a colleague of Professor E. H. Rennie for 38 years, unveiled a memorial tablet to Professor Rennie in the lecture theatre, which has been named after him as the first occupant of the Angas chair of chemistry.

Professor Chapman said that Professor Rennie had occupied the chair from 1885 to 1927, and was the first Australian student to be appointed to a chair at an Australian university. He was elected a member of the University Council in 1899, and was acting Vice-Chancellor for several periods. One of his greatest public honors was to be elected president of the Australian Association for the Advancement of Science.

A vote of thanks to Mr. Justice Angas Parsons and Professor Chapman was passed at the instance of the Minister for Education (Mr. Jeffries).

Adv. 13-6-33

GREAT CONCERT AT CONSERVATORIUM

Large Audience Thrilled

By Dr. Alex Burnard

One of the finest concerts ever given by the staff of the Elder Conservatorium was enthusiastically received by last night's large audience.

Bach's Sonata for Flute and Piano (No. 5) was handled in a most musicianly manner by Miss Constance Pether and Mr. George Pearce. The first two movements showed fine control of the long breaths and echo effects, and strongly marked cross-rhythms and neat phrasing were featured in the Allegro. The balance throughout was excellent.

Mr. William Silver was in great form in his piano group. In the Brahms D Minor Ballade, which grew to a great surge of tone, one felt the tremendous tragedy of the story. Mendelssohn's F Major, "Song Without Words," was songful, if momentarily approaching a forced tone, and lovely purity marked Debussy's "Flaxen-haired Girl." His "Water Play" (Ravel) was beautifully clear and liquid, with more give-and-take toward the end, where there was a perfection of delicacy and restraint. His encore (Rameau, or Rameau-esque) was charming.

In "O Men From the Fields" (Herbert Hughes) Miss Hilda Gill gave a great reading—brooding maternal protectiveness, and a most intensely felt third stanza. Vaughan Williams's "Whither Must I Wander" was just as moving, a beautifully sad picture of one haunted by memories. Mr. Peter Bornstein and Mr. George Pearce gave a truly inspiring performance of a masterpiece—the Brahms D Minor Sonata for Violin and Piano. The audience at once appreciated the Allegro for its nobly abstract thought, and the daintiness and precision of the Scherzo, the rugged force and strongly rhythmic markings of the Presto—and the golden tone of the slow movement, the restfulness and ease of the bowing. Throughout this glorious work both artists collaborated with a rare refinement of ensemble, balance, and musicianship, and fully merited the ovation at its close.

In the "Elegy" of Van Goens, Mr. Harold Parsons compassed subtleties of shading that were nothing short of perfect. Here was one of the loveliest pieces of elegiac writing, and here was the artist for it. A fine foil was a Spanish Dance (Popper), a thing of hearty merriment, whose phrasing and general technique ministered to the mastery of Mr. Parsons over his instrument. He gave a beautiful sostenuto to the encore—a Danish Folk Song of Hermann Sandby's arrangement.

Mr. John Horner gave a very virile presentation of a rarely heard organ work, Liszt's Fantasia and Fugue on "Ad nos, ad solutarem undam." A procession of varied figures, some of which (as is no matter for surprise, considering who wrote them), obviously derive from piano technique, were featured in the Fantasia. The Fugue is very interesting material, and showed remarkable concentration in its development. Its lay-out gave opportunity for some striking foils in registration, and the technique was very sound, leading to a veritable paean at the close.

The sensitiveness of the accompaniments of Miss Maude Puddy and Mr. George Pearce was of a piece with the high level attained by the soloists.

Adv. 13-6-33

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN ORCHESTRA

CONTEMPORARY MUSIC

To the Editor

Sir—Dr. Burnard's plea for the inclusion of "contemporary works" in our orchestral programmes, does not fall, as he might suppose, upon "deaf ears." We are really anxious to achieve everything good, both old and new, that may lie within our powers; and if the programmes have continued to err on the conservative side, it is largely due to the many obstacles that beset a more adventurous policy. Dr. Burnard knows well the extreme technical difficulties of the more interesting of our modern works, as well as their demand for a far larger orchestral force than can possibly be furnished here. There is also the matter of expense. Such works are often not published, and must be loaned at a charge of anything from £15 to £25, and even if purchasable they are still very costly.

We are severely conditioned in the matter of finance, as well as in the facilities for constant and sufficient rehearsal; and while I can never praise our players highly enough for their loyalty and devotion (particularly at the present time), the fact remains that many of them are enthusiastic and ardent amateurs, without either the time or the opportunity to acquire a full professional status. If we in Adelaide could command Sir Henry Wood's magnificent and experienced players, all of whom are professionals, not to mention the support of those immense audiences that throng the Queen's Hall promenades, we would gladly include in our programmes any number of modern works.

The task of the executive has been, and still is, one of extreme difficulty. Nevertheless, we welcome every kind and helpful criticism, as well as every evidence of appreciation and interest that may be forthcoming. Furthermore, as opportunity may allow, we will certainly endeavor in the future to consider Dr. Burnard's request. It is not the lack of will that has hitherto compelled us to "play safe."—I am, Sir, &c.

E. HAROLD DAVIES,
Chairman of executive, South Australian Orchestra, University of Adelaide.

Adv. 13-6-33 cont'd

Adv. 14-6-33

WONDER OF HUMAN BRAIN

Likened To Enormous Switchboard

The evolution of the brain since life appeared on the earth more than 900 million years ago, was traced by Professor H. J. Wilkinson in a University extension lecture last night. The large attendance included the Vice-Chancellor of the University (Sir William Mitchell).

Describing the changes which the brain of the vertebrates (of which man is the supreme example) have undergone, Professor Wilkinson said that between the brain of the ape and that of the most primitive form of man there was an enormous gap. Man and ape had derived from a common ancestry, but man had broken away many millions of years ago and pursued a unique form of development. The gradual evolution of the brain until it had achieved a state of complexity which it was beyond the power of imagination to grasp, was dictated by an unconscious ability to benefit by experience. Man owed his superiority to the intricacy of his brain. He had the power to accumulate experience, to adapt himself to changes in his environment, and to assert his individuality.

The lecturer likened the brain to an immense switchboard, operated by thousands of millions of nerve processes. Astronomers, he said, were wont to stagger the ordinary intelligence by talking in terms of millions upon millions of miles, and physicists indulged in similar fancies when speaking of the atom; yet when it came to a question of sheer numbers, the biologist dealing with the structure of the nervous system, could silence them both. The key portion of the brain—that which received the impulses from the sensory nerves and transmitted them to the motor nerves—consisted of 10,000 million nerve processes capable of an incalculable number of connections. It had been estimated that if a typist had to write in a single line the number of connections of which only two million processes were capable, she would require a strip of paper six miles long.

Adv. 14-6-33

WORK ON BONYTHON HALL BEGINS

Will Take 2 Years To Build

Work on the Bonython Great Hall at the Adelaide University began yesterday, when workmen pulled down old shrubs and a hedge on the western side of the Exhibition Building, the site of the hall.

The hall is named after Sir Langdon Bonython, who is meeting the whole cost.

The new building will hold from 1,200 to 1,300 persons, and will be used for all big University functions, such as commemoration. It is expected that the hall will be ready for use in two years. Tractors were used yesterday to remove the shrubs from the site.