

# UNIVERSITY FOR OUTBACK STUDENTS.

## Proposed Establishment at Canberra.

A suggestion has been made that an Examining University, on the lines of the London University should be established at the Federal capital.

The proposal of Professor MacCallum, of the Sydney University, to establish an Examining University at Canberra for the benefit of those students who are unable to attend lectures, will come up for discussion at the inter-Universities Congress, which will be opened in Adelaide this afternoon. This is the fourth congress, and it is the first time it has met in Adelaide. About 30 members representing the six universities of the Commonwealth will take part in the deliberations. Professor MacCallum's proposal has aroused widespread interest. The first suggestion was that an examining university should be established at Canberra by the Federal Government. A counter suggestion was made by the New South Wales Minister of Education that travelling lecturers should be sent through the country so that outlying students might have the benefit of oral instruction in place of a correspondence course. It has also been pointed out that all Australian Universities, with the exception of Sydney, grant degrees in Arts and Laws under certain conditions to students who are unable to attend lectures.

Sir Henry Barraclough (Dean of the Faculty of Engineering of Sydney University), who arrived by the Melbourne express on Wednesday to attend the inter-Universities and Science Congresses, when questioned on the matter refused to commit himself further than to say that in his opinion the scheme merited very full consideration, and was well worth discussing.

Sir James said he was exceedingly pleased at the manner in which the status of the engineering profession had advanced during the past five years. Undoubtedly the fine work of the Institute of Engineers was responsible for much of the increased respect in which their profession was held. The history of Australian progress was bound up with the work of the engineer, the architect, and the surveyor, neither of whom received any marked appreciation as a rule. This made the fuller recognition of engineering the more valuable.

Professor A. A. Lawson (Sydney University) said he had preserved an open mind regarding the proposal for an examining institute, and was looking forward to the discussions to-day to resolve him one way or the other. Professor Lawson, who is a distinguished botanist, considered that the true philosophy of plant life should be the foundation of all knowledge of agricultural products. The appointment of Dr. Darnell Smith, the eminent botanist, as Director of the Sydney Botanical Gardens, marked a distinct step in progress. The institution was now stamped as a serious scientific one rather than a mere casual pleasure resort. The Mendelian law of heredity had revolutionised agricultural practice, and Mendel, it must be remembered, was a purely scientific botanist, who knew nothing of agriculture. Professor Lawson, who is a brilliant artist, has a wonderful collection of paintings of plants in natural colors. He has brought a number of these with him to Adelaide, and may show his fascinating collection of colored lantern slides during his stay in Adelaide.

Other States Worse. "The figures are not worse than those in other States," Sir James continued, "in fact, they are rather better. There are some indications of amelioration as a result of the campaign which is being conducted against the disease. The Australian Association for Fighting Venereal Diseases, Victorian branch, of which I am President, has been the means of placing the facts before responsible citizens, and leaving them to judge for themselves the necessity for quick and forceful action. There are three main methods by which the disease can be controlled. The average age at which men in Australia marry is 29 years, and women 26 and 27. Early marriage and absence of promiscuity would mean the elimination of venereal disease. That is the first method. The second method is the adequate treatment of all those who are infected. It is an intensely costly and troublesome business. Most sufferers from the disease can be rendered non-infective. A number, however, cannot be cured in the later stages.

### Preventive Measures Urged.

The third method always arouses controversy. It is known that if those who expose themselves to infection adopt medical sanitary measures a large number will escape infection. It is suggested that this causes immorality. The answer is that there is no evidence that the statement is correct, and it is certain that the withholding of knowledge will end in bringing infected children into the world, for which there can be no moral justification. It is not for doctor or clergyman to lay down laws of conduct for his fellow man. He can only express his opinion, study the facts, and leave them to speak for themselves.

### The Baby Bonus.

Referring to the matter of the baby bonus, Sir James said that at the present time £750,000 a year was being given by the Commonwealth Government in that direction. It had not increased the birth rate; it had not reduced the infantile death rate; and it had not reduced the puerperal mortality. At the present time in 200 births, a woman died. By proper measures the Rockefeller Foundation, in certain cases, reduced the rate about one-quarter. That required organization and knowledge. If the £750,000 paid for the baby bonus were placed under the control of the medical profession it would be safe to say that disgraceful mortality could be greatly reduced. That could be done by the provision of maternity hospitals, and of public and private ante-natal clinics, and by the training of qualified nurses. An additional argument was the fact that whereas one woman in 200 died at childbirth, several other women were seriously injured, so that they could not have any more children.

### Position Not Creditable.

Sir James concluded that the position at present was not creditable to Australia because it could be rectified. He had never any fear of failure to effect betterment of the conditions as they were at present, once the public properly understood the problem. The activities of the societies with which he was connected were educational on the lines he had mapped out. By that way, and that way only, could they hope for success in their endeavours.

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## THE RED PLAGUE.

### Australia's Terrible Scourge.

### Appalling Melbourne Statistics

Appalling statistics on the terrible scourge of venereal disease in Australia were quoted on Thursday by Sir James Barrett, of the Melbourne University. He said that 30 per cent. of the people who die in the Melbourne Hospital were syphilitic, and the statistics of the Melbourne Women's Hospital showed that 8 per cent. of the mothers were similarly affected.

Sir James is the recognised expert on this terrible disease in the sister capital. He informed a representative of The Register on Thursday that the problem of venereal disease had come to the front lately because the veil of secrecy relating to it had been removed, and a plain straight forward, and he thought, wholesome statement of the case of the disease was being presented to the public by the medical profession.

"The facts are," Sir James continued, "that 30 per cent. of the people who die in the Melbourne Hospital are syphilitic. That does not mean that 30 per cent. of the patients are syphilitic, but that that number have died who would probably have still been living if they had not had that disease. Statistics from the Women's Hospital, Melbourne, show that 8 per cent. of the mothers in that institution are syphilitic. It is estimated that about 25 per cent. of the insane cases are due to syphilis. Out of the 189 postmortem examinations on insane people made in the metropolitan district of Melbourne during 1922, 106 were found to be syphilitic. One half of the people in the institution for the blind are there because of venereal disease. One quarter of deaf and dumb people are so because of syphilis. Gonorrhoea is supposed to be three times as frequent as syphilis, and it is estimated that one half of the sterile marriages and one third to a half of the special operations performed on women are due to that disease, while the total of morbidity and mortality cases is enormous." Dr. Johnstone, of the venereal clinic, Melbourne, estimated that of those people in Melbourne above the age of 16, 32 per cent. are, or have been, infected by venereal disease.

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## EDUCATIONISTS MEET

### Universities' Conference

### BEGINS THIS AFTERNOON

Delegates from the universities of all the Australian States are in Adelaide to attend an inter-Universities conference, which will be begun at the Adelaide University this afternoon.

During the last few years delegates have met periodically to discuss questions of common interests and relationships between the various institutions. Matters are also discussed in which the experience gained by the older universities can be used in helping the younger bodies.

The opportunity was taken to hold the conference in Adelaide this week, as the majority of the delegates have come here to be present at the meeting of the Australian Association for the Advancement of Science, which will begin on Monday.

Sir George Murray (Chancellor of the Adelaide University) will entertain the delegates at dinner at the Grand Central Hotel tomorrow night.

Mr. Stanley S. Addison (Assistant Registrar of the Melbourne University) is secretary of the conference. The delegates are:

Sydney.—Sir T. W. Edgeworth David, B.A., D.Sc. (chairman of Professorial Board), Sir Henry Barraclough, B.E. (Dean of the Faculty of Engineering), Messrs. E. R. Holme, O.B.E., M.A. (Dean of the Faculty of Arts), and A. A. Lawson, D.Sc.

Melbourne.—Sir John MacFarland (Chancellor), Sir James Barrett, Dr. J. P. Wilson, Mr. M. P. Wilson, representing the staff—Professors W. E. Asar, E. Scott, and H. S. Summers.

Perth.—Professors N. T. M. Wilmore (Vice-Chancellor), A. D. Ross, and W. Whitfield, and Mr. E. de C. Clarke.

Brisbane.—Professors Priestley, Parnell, and Richards.

Hobart.—Representing the council—Professors R. L. Dunbabin and Alan Burn; representing the staff—Major L. F. Giblin, B.A. (chairman of the Faculty of Science), Professor D. P. Copland, B.A., and Mr. L. Rodway, C.M.G.

Adelaide.—Sir George Murray, Professor Mitchell (Vice-Chancellor), professors of the University, and members of the Education Committee.

and the other, who was killed at the war, was a second tenor. We could do anything over three octaves." An uncle, Mr. A. Gard, is also well known in Adelaide. He has for many years conducted combined church choirs with great success.

Miss Thrush's father had a very fine voice, and the elder brother, now the Rev. Clifford Thrush, who toured with the Branscombe Westminster singers, was very well known as a boy musician. "Mr. Branscombe offered to take him to England, where he would have been educated at Eton," said Miss Thrush, "but my mother thought at 12 he needed a home upbringing, and refused the offer. The other brother, Reginald, is well known, too. Our parents, all being musical, have given us all their help and encouragement.

The musical opportunities they could not have themselves, they have passed on to us."

Operatic work has always been the favourite study of both the artists, and with this object in view they studied operatic excerpts at the Conservatorium, and endeavoured to perfect themselves for musical purposes in Italian, French, and German. As early as 1915 Mr. Gard's Italian work received the best reception of all his performances, and he and Miss Thrush also studied French and German with Monsieur Byrn.

### Education.

Both of them are South Australian born. Miss Thrush attended St. Paul's school in Flinders street, and later St. Peter's Collegiate School for Girls, where she studied music under the sisters. "My first music lessons," she said, "were given to me by my mother. Without her enthusiasm and self-sacrifice we would none of us have been able to give ourselves to music as we have. Miss Millicent Dean taught me later on, and a very good teacher she was, too. I learned theory from Miss Florence Cook. At the Conservatorium I studied the piano with Mr. I. G. Reimann, and held a scholarship for three years. For seven years Mr. Winsloe Hall taught me singing, and I had a three years' scholarship with him, after which I won a special Elder scholarship for a year."

Mr. Harold Gard, who was educated at the North Adelaide and other public schools, first studied the piano and theory under Mr. Bowering, L.A.B., of North Adelaide. For seven years he studied singing under Mr. Winsloe Hall, and six years were given to the piano, under Mr. A. W. Fletcher. He won two scholarships—the Clarke Memorial, and the Elder Special Tenor.

In oratorio both have done fine work as soloists—Mr. Gard in "The Messiah" (Harmony Society), and "Elijah" (Royal Choral Society), and Miss Thrush in "Elijah," "The Creation," and Bach's "Christmas Oratorio" (Royal Choral Society).

### Blended Voices.

Speaking of their rare good fortune in being able to sing in the same operas, Mr. Gard remarked that in earlier days he had had to tone down in order to sing with Miss Thrush, but that as her voice had matured it had attained a much deeper quality. "When I went to Mr. Winsloe Hall first," said Miss Thrush, "it was more like the voice of a girl of 12 than of 17, and I can never be sufficiently grateful for the care he took of it, and his slow and sure development. Mr. Winsloe Hall has been a good friend to us, and we are both very appreciative. To the late Dr. Ennis, too, we both owe much."

Mr. and Mrs. Gard are going first to England, and then to Milan. They are enthusiastic over the prospect, and mean to avail themselves of every possible chance of studying and hearing grand opera. One of their first visits will be to Mr. A. W. Fletcher, Mr. Gard's old music teacher, who is now organist at Torquay. This old friend is the father of Percy Fletcher, the famous English composer. In the days when the Gard family were touring, Mr. Percy Fletcher wrote for them, at the request of his father, a number of part songs.

"Do you want to know about our children?" Mrs. Gard asked the reporter, with a disarming smile. "We have two little sons, one two and one five. The grandparents have nobly volunteered to keep them safe for us until we return."

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## MEDICAL CONGRESS

### Additional Papers

In connection with the conference to be held next week by the Public Health Association of Australia in conjunction with the sanitary and hygiene section of the Science Congress, a visit will be made to the quarantine station on Tuesday afternoon. On the following morning a paper on "The Health of Women Workers in Factories" will be read. On Friday the paper prepared by Mr. Lance Cooling (Queensland Health Department) on "Mosquito Control in Australia" will be read, and Dr. Harvey Sutton (New South Wales Education Department) will read a paper on "Epidemics—Cycles of Diseases in School Children."