

UNIVERSITY PROBLEMS ABROAD.

BUILDINGS CROWDED OUT WITH STUDENTS.

Before the Graduates' Association, Dr. Heaton lectured last night on some University Problems in Europe and America. Dr. E. Harold Davies occupied the chair.

Dr. Heaton, who delivered lectures on Australian topics in nearly all the Universities of England and Canada last year, said he had found everywhere that universities were crowded out with students. In England there were 60 per cent. more students enrolled in 1923 than in 1913, in spite of the fact that most of the ex-soldiers who flooded the universities after the Armistice were now gone. There was need for many more local universities in England, but the lack of adequate funds made expansion difficult. The existing institutions were working hard against great odds; buildings were wanted, more staff was needed, and the present staffs were underpaid. Yet work went on in an uncomplaining way, and the university teachers, like most of the middle-class, were paying heavily for the war in the reduced standard of their living. North American Universities were also crowded, but were more wealthy, especially in buildings. Private bequests, land grants and government subsidies were large, and poor students by working hard all the summer were able to pay their way through the winter sessions. Many Americans were afraid that the entrance standard had been made too low, and there was a general desire to make admission subject to more thorough tests.

Throughout the university world there was a growing recognition of the need for reforms in teaching methods. The lecture system stood generally condemned as the sole method of teaching, and interesting experiments in group discussion, individual tuition, and individual work by students themselves were being tried. It was recognized that the big advance in teaching methods in elementary and secondary schools must be followed by a drastic overhauling of teaching technique in the universities. But the cost of providing tuition was so great that progress would be slow. Some American universities were reacting against early professional specialization, and it was now the practice at such universities as Harvard to insist that those who wished to take up a professional course, must first get the liberal education offered by a degree course in arts. American and Canadian universities had developed university extension work in a way unknown in England and Australia. In the first place they offered systematic correspondence tuition to students who were too far away to come to lectures, and ran summer schools where serious work was done. At the same time they had developed elaborate schemes for giving general educational assistance to the rural population, and by the loan of books, slides, films, the publication of bulletins on topics of importance, and the sending of lecturers out into the remote regions they had made the university a factor in the life of the general public.

In parts of the United States the problem of freedom of academic teaching had emerged in an acute form during recent years. Some states and individuals had endeavored with a measure of success to ban the teaching of evolution, and in other places certain reactionary interests had tried to impose limitations on freedom of thought and teaching in the social sciences. In England, however, the tradition of academic freedom, both for the individual teacher and for the university as a whole, was jealously guarded. Teachers were in no way impaired in the exercise of their freedom as citizens, and many academics placed an open and active part in political life, even standing as Parliamentary candidates on occasions. The universities recognized this right and trusted their teachers not to abuse the classroom as a place for partisan teaching. The trust was justified, for however strongly the British teacher might feel about problems of economic, social, and international importance, he took as his ideal the impartial search for the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. University authorities looked with caution on grants of public money, and were definitely unwilling to take State aid if any restriction of freedom was involved, and at least one unfortunate recent incident had made them determined to look gifts from private benefactors "in the mouth."

ADVERTISER 5-6-25

NATIONAL FORESTRY SCHOOL.

In connection with the establishment by the Federal Government of a National Forestry School, it has been reported that the Prime Minister (Mr. Bruce), had communicated with all the States to ascertain the number of students for which each State would undertake to be responsible. Discussing the position yesterday, the Minister of Agriculture (Hon. T. Butterfield), who has also charge of the Forestry Department, said, in general terms, the Government were favorably disposed toward the proposal. The matter, however, would be considered by the Cabinet, and a reply forwarded to the Prime Minister in due course.

FEDERAL FORESTRY.

A Programme Outlined.

The Minister for Home and Territories (Sr. G. F. Pearce) released for publication yesterday a statement setting out the Federal Ministry's forestry programme. Summarized, the proposals are as follow:—

Possibilities at Canberra.

The capital territory comprises three regions:—1. The Plains.—Forestry at Canberra should not embrace the plains nor the tree planting on the hills around or in the capital. This work may well be left to Mr. Weston (the officer in charge). 2. The Hilly Country.—Experimental planting should be undertaken at the northern end. The area is about 8,000 acres. At the southern end there is a very large area of poor country. The demarcation of that portion which is not required for grazing purposes should be carried out, and the remainder dedicated to forestry. Working plans for the planting of the valleys in this hilly region can then be prepared and steps taken to have everything ready for carrying out the work in three years' time. 3. Mountainous Country.—This covers the whole catchment of the Cotter. On the flanks of the mountains stretches a narrow timber belt that requires forest management. In the valley both at the lower end near the dam and at the upper end under Bimberi are good areas for planting. Steps should be taken to prepare plans for this work. This will necessitate the appointment of a trained forester and a small staff. The planting at the lower end is particularly urgent, as the present condition of the land in question is such as to be a menace from the point of view of fire, and also the streams running through it are impregnated with mineral salts, as a result of denudation. The upper area requires to be made accessible by linking it up with a dray road to Orroral Station. The forester will require a house, and this might well be built at the end of this proposed road. The programme of planting should aim at 1,500 acres per year within the catchment, the regeneration of the eucalyptus belt and the protection of the area from fire. The staff will include forest guards, who would require shelter huts on the water shed. A separate forest nursery will not be needed at Canberra.

Australian Forestry School.

The Federal Capital Territory is quite suitable for a forestry school. It embraces a fair range of forest conditions, and has the advantage of 20 years of experimental planting and excellent arboreta for students to study. It is as good as, if not a better site, than that chosen by the Australian State Foresters at Laurel Hill, some 80 miles west of Canberra. The decision to establish the school once made, the principal should be appointed without delay so that this long-awaited institution may be established as soon as practicable.

Jervis Bay.

This territory offers a good field for pine planting, and a planting should be laid down having for objective the planting of 500 acres a year. A nursery will be required and a foreman to look after it, while a forest guard will be wanted to range the territory. The drawing up of working plans can be done by the officer in charge of Canberra forestry. The five-mile-long shifting sand dune at the south-western end should be fixed, as it is a serious menace to the country inland.

ROUGH ESTIMATE OF COST.

Afforestation at Capital Territory and Jervis Bay.	
Salaries.	
One qualified forester	1600-720
One trained forester	480-600
Three forest guards at £300	900
One nursery foreman	450
Two fire fighters	300
Labourer	250
	£2,980
Works (cost spread over three years).	
Cotter Forest Station	£2,000
Roadmaking	500
Implements, &c.	400
Fencing	2,750
Rangers' huts	60
Seed	1,500
Preparing 1,000 acres Upper Cotter ..	500
Planting 1,000 acres Lower Cotter ..	6,000
Preparing 1,500 acres Jervis Bay ..	750
Quarters nursery foreman, &c. ..	2,000
Jervis Bay	2,000
Seed Jervis Bay	1,500
Implements, &c.	400
	£18,300
Australian Forestry School.	
Salaries Only.	
Principal	£1,200-1,500
Two lecturers at £600	1,200

NATIONAL FORESTRY SCHOOL.

From SAMUEL DIXON:—The Prime Minister's announcement that the proposed National Forestry Board at Canberra meets with general approval is certainly surprising. The originator of the idea appears to have been Mr. Lane Poole, whose supercilious, ill-founded objection to the Adelaide school was that South Australia had no forests, and he urges, and has succeeded in obtaining a school for Canberra. The bleak, cold situation, and scanty rainfall of the Federal capital does not all fit it for teaching forestry for any one of the States, and it is a most serious objection to its being a success. Each State needs a separate and distinct school for the reason that a large proportion of mankind are only fitted by their mentalities to follow in a beaten track. The brainy men who can strike out and apply general principles do not seem to exceed 5 per cent. in any trade or profession. Hence, how absurd to attempt training forestry at Canberra for the tropical and sub-tropical littorals of Queensland and New South Wales. The latter, indeed, to those who can see, is a terrible example of the enormous cost of the democratic practices of buying votes by sacrificing State property, as in the 1861 Land Act, by which idiotic folly the enormously valuable forests, with many millions were destroyed. No forest land was exempted from "free selection," and I well recollect seeing magnificent timber, 10 to 20 to the acre, and then worth £10 to £20 apiece, ringbarked and destroyed to comply with the "improvement clause of labour to the value of 10/ per acre." I sincerely hope this State will not be a party to the Prime Minister's proposal, but that our University will maintain its position and prestige of being not only the first forestry school, but also the best, although it is at present endangered by the Ministry's loss of Mr. Corbin, whose careful, scientific, practical studies, if completed, would have benefited all Australia. I have always had the keenest appreciation of science as applied to forests. The true, the real, and the most beneficial policy of the Commonwealth is to subsidize each State's School of Forestry so that each student may learn and conform to local soils, climate, and conditions. It has happened that not only in forestry but in other branches of practical knowledge the theories as taught have been not only inapplicable, but even impracticable, from want of practical experience at the time. Lord Novar was well aware of this, but thoroughly approved of Kuitpo, where both are adjusted to the proper zone. Moreover, the proposal of 26 students for all Australia with diversities of climates and soils, does not meet the case. If the Prime Minister and the State Premiers are able to take the statesman's wide view, which considers not only the present but the wants of the next and succeeding generations, they will sedulously encourage treeplanting by private owners by taxing plantations only when they begin to pay. No sane man can be expected to plant in a large scale and pay land tax for 20 or 30 years. This policy, if adopted, would benefit the owner by sheltering his stock, and would give employment of the healthiest and pleasantest nature for thousands of young Australians.

NEWS 4-6-25

Indicting the University

Almost drowned by the noise of "throw-downs" and college yells, passing practically unnoticed in the violent explosions of election week, the address to undergraduates of Sydney University by that eminent King's counsel, Mr. R. Windeyer, constituted perhaps the most scathing indictment of an Australian university ever uttered by a public man.

In place of fitting young men and women to play a fine part in the world, of developing all their capacities and presenting Australia with large-minded and large-hearted leaders, Sydney University is described as the clashing ground of rival faculties, each faculty oblivious of community interests.

The keynote of university life, declares Mr. Windeyer sadly, is apathy! Apathy in the search for the great truths of life; apathy toward the problems of humanity for their own sake; apathy in the domestic society and apathy on the sporting field.

And the result is that the influence of the university on the life and wellbeing of Sydney is negligible. Oxford and Cambridge have made world history in successive centuries, and today are turning out eager, thoughtful, valuable men and women. Sydney's chief product would appear to be dry rot.

ADVERTISER 5-6-25 ELDER CONSERVATORIUM.

The fifth concert of the season will be held in the Elder Hall on Monday week. The programme will consist of a splendid variety of items, which will be rendered by members of the Conservatorium staff, William Hurlstone's Sonata, arranged for the bassoon and piano, will be given by Mr. W. Foote, who is an excellent exponent of wood-wind instruments, with Mr. William Silver. Other items will be Gabriel Faure's Sonata, for violin and piano, by Mr. Charles Schilsky and Miss Maudo Puddy; a group cello solos by Mr. Harold Parsons, accompanied by Mr. George Pearce; a bracket of Schubert's songs by Miss Hilda Gill, and Percy Grainger's "Zanzibar boat song," a trio, which will be performed on one piano, by Miss Puddy, Mr. Silver, and Mr. Parsons. Plan to-morrow at S. Marshall & Sons, Gwyer place.

UNIVERSITY PROBLEMS.

LECTURE BY DR. HEATON.

"Some University Problems in Europe and America" was the title of an address delivered by Dr. Heaton before the Graduates' Association in the Prince of Wales lecture room at the Adelaide University on Thursday evening. Dr. E. Harold Davies presided.

Dr. Heaton, who lectured on Australian topics in nearly all the universities of England and Canada last year, said he had found everywhere that universities were crowded out with students. In England there were 60 per cent. more students enrolled in 1923 than in 1913. There was need for many more local universities in England, but the lack of adequate funds made expansion difficult. The existing institutions were working hard against great odds, buildings were wanted, more staff was needed, and the present staffs were underpaid. Yet work went on in the ordinary way, and the university teachers, like most of the middle class, were paying heavily for the war in the reduced standard of their living. North American universities were also crowded, but were more wealthy, especially in buildings. Private bequests, land grants, and Government subsidies were large. Poor students, by working hard all the summer, were able to pay their way through the winter sessions. Throughout the university world there was a growing recognition of the need for reforms in teaching methods. The lecture system stood generally condemned in so far as it was the sole method of teaching, and interesting experiments in group discussion, individual tuition, and individual work by students themselves were being tried. It was recognized that the big advance in teaching methods in elementary and secondary schools must be followed by a drastic overhauling of teaching technique in the universities. But the cost of providing tuition was so great that progress would be slow. Some American universities were reacting against early professional specialization, and it was now the practice at such universities as Harvard to insist that those who wished to take up professional courses must first get the liberal education offered by a degree course in arts.

American and Canadian universities, he said, had developed university extension work in a way unknown in England and Australia. In the first place they offered systematic correspondence tuition to students who were too far away to attend lectures, and conducted summer schools where serious work was done. At the same time they had developed elaborate schemes for giving general educational assistance to the rural population, and by the loan of books, slides, films, the publication of bulletins on topics of importance, and the sending of lecturers out into the remote regions, they had made the university a factor in the life of the general public. In parts of the United States the problem of freedom of academic teaching had emerged in an acute form during recent years. Some States and individuals had endeavoured with a measure of success to ban the teaching of evolution, while in other places certain reactionary interests had tried to impose limitations on freedom of thought and teaching in the social sciences. In England, however, the tradition of academic freedom both for the individual teacher and for the university as a whole was jealously guarded. Teachers were in no way impaired in the exercise of their freedom as citizens, as many academics played an open and active part in political life, even standing as Parliamentary candidates on occasion. The universities recognized this right, and trusted their teachers not to abuse the classroom as a place for partisan teaching, and the trust was justified. However strongly the British teacher might feel about problems of economic, social, and international importance, he took as his ideal the impartial search for the truth. University authorities looked with caution on grants of public money, and were definitely unwilling to take State aid if any restriction of freedom was involved, and at least one unfortunate recent incident had made them determined to look gifts from private benefactors "in the mouth."

REGISTER 5-6-25

FORESTERS BUT NO FORESTS.

Forestry has always been the Cinderella of State governmental activities in Australia. The States have thought in acres for afforestation purposes, where they ought to have dealt in square miles. They have spent thousands of pounds, where they might judiciously have invested millions, with the certainty of rich direct and indirect returns. Even the growing shortage of softwood timbers in other parts of the world, and the certainty that the time will come when Australia will be thrown upon its own timber resources, have not moved them to set aside reservations and engage in afforestation on the scale demanded by the needs of the nation.