

# ADDRESSES AT SCIENCE CONGRESS.

## PROFESSOR WOOD JONES ON THE ABORIGINE.

### ESTABLISHMENT OF RESERVES URGED.

PERTH, Tuesday.

The eighteenth annual session of the Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science was continued at the Modern School to-day. The programme consisted of papers read in the various sections of the congress, which is sitting separately.

Professor F. Wood Jones delivered a presidential address on "The claims of the Australian aborigine." He said it was useless to make any attempt to administer Australia for the benefit of the aborigine, as had been done in other lands, since he was not capable of taking advantage of the civilizing influence of Anglo-Saxon rule. Nevertheless, there was a debt. We had doomed him to lingering, but certain, death wherever we had come into prolonged contact with him. If the aborigine had not thrived so well on religious dogmas, alcohol, cast-off garments, or venereal disease as he had done on the exercise of his own pursuits, or had been too low in the scale of humanity to take advantage of them. We had been teaching the aborigine civilization and Christianity for a period which was long enough to form judgment, and it was time to pause and ask ourselves whether it suited him. The whole experience accumulated since the first days of colonization in Australia had clearly shown that entry into white civilization and continued existence were incompatible where the aborigine was concerned. One generation of contact was enough to seal his fate, and had sealed his fate in the neighbourhood of all the capital cities of Australia. It was impossible that the aborigine would ever live as a healthy, helpful coolie race. The aborigine's racial fate was not inevitably sealed, and the only way in which we might reasonably hope to save him and justify ourselves in the eyes of the world was to establish properly organized and properly administered reserves for him.

### FORESTRY AND LAND SETTLEMENT.

In the absence of Mr. C. E. Lane Poole, the Presidential address to the agriculture and forestry section was read by the secretary. The address stated that the choice of a forester to preside over the section indicated that a better understanding of the truth that forestry and agriculture were interdependent existed. Forestry was agriculture on a long rotation, and forests were crops of trees to be grown again and again, not mines to be exhausted and abandoned. Land unsuitable for agriculture was often suitable for forestry, but to convert good forests into poor grazing was economically unsound. Forestry employed more men to the square mile than the pastoral industries and there was a lack of appreciation of the fact that forestry was a continuous business, and land in the 20 in. and over rainfall belts all over Australia had been regarded as potentially agricultural and fit for close land settlement. The surveyor, not the agricultural expert, had decided what land should be subdivided for settlement, while the advice of the forester had in almost every case been disregarded. The total area capable of being bought under forest management in Australia had been set down at 24,500,000 acres, and of that less than half had been permanently dedicated to forestry. Through the policy of frenzied land settlement, Governments were forced to resume old settlement areas that had been abandoned, the settler having sold the timber (the only crop the country would grow), and devote them to their obvious purpose. On the threshold of her development Australia imported no less than £4,000,000 worth of timber a year and had yet to learn that properly organized forestry would pay better than land settlement on the poorer soils which were, today, all that remained for selection. The cost of bad land settlement could not be estimated, but the worst loss of all was not the timber or the money, but the loss of the settler himself who gave up in despair. Outside the regions of good rainfall, there was still need for great care in land settlement. The forests were of the open savannah type, and were not milling propositions; but their influence was great for they tended to equalize the climatic conditions and act as barriers to desiccating winds and prevent soil erosion. The denudation of large areas for agriculture, without any thought of making protective forest reserves, was likely to have very serious effects in time to come. The destruction of forests at the head of the rivers to make poor grazing country had produced grave results. The need for some co-ordination between the expert forester and the expert agriculturist was very great for only thus could the desolation of the abandoned land settlement area be prevented and the maintenance of climatic, soil, and water conditions, necessary to enable agriculture to continue to be practised inland, be assured.

### DEVELOPMENT OF HEALTH SENSE.

"We grow up from childhood, always contriving to do that which we should not. We marry without a health certificate, asking, 'What is eugenics compared with love?'" declared Dr. Everett Atkinson, Commissioner of Public Health in Western Australia, in a lecture before the sanitary science and hygiene section. He said the individual must be educated on the principles of preventive medicine and public health. They had not yet succeeded in driving home the value of hygiene as they had one in advancing the profession of preventive medicine. We grow up from infancy through childhood, wallowing in the dirt and eating what we should not. He condemned the carelessness of the average householder in regard to flies and food, and asked if they wondered that infants developed enteritis and swelled the number of cases of preventable diseases. All through man's life the laws that were paid least heed to were those of health, and lectures on the subject were enjoyed more because of the laugh they caused than the knowledge they conveyed. A mother should know the laws and rules of child-bearing, so that a variation from the normal could be appreciated. She should know how to breast-feed her baby. No "health sense" had been developed in the community. It was not big subject compared with the vastness of the results which the development of the sense would produce throughout the State. The laws of health hygiene and sanitation were the main parts of a child's education, and should be taught along side reading and writing lessons.

### AGE OF APPRENTICES.

Mr. James Nagle, lecturing on trade education, argued that some kind of special preparation ought to be made for entering into apprenticeship; for, unfortunately, in the highly industrial community in which they lived, it was the custom that entry as a trade-learner must be at about the age of 16 years. It was only a precociously intelligent boy who could pass his leaving certificate examination at 16 years. Most employers were averse to taking apprentices who could not complete the period of indenture before they reached the adult age. That point should be considered very carefully by employers. There could be no question that lateness of entry beyond the customary age of 16 years would be fully compensated for by the value arising out of the extra time at school, and employers should get out of their minds any idea that the age of 18 years, or even a little higher, was too old to begin learning a skilled calling. Records of the training system of the Repatriation Department disproved such an idea.

### CLAIMS OF PURE SCIENCE.

Professor J. D. Kenner, of Sydney University, delivered an address to the chemistry section on "Some aspects of the problem of molecular structure." Sir Ernest Rutherford, he said, had reminded them that research was pure science, and was an indispensable preliminary to progress in applied science. Nowhere could this apply with greater force than in a new country, with its own special difficulties. It would therefore prove in the long run to be a fundamental mistake if in their enthusiasm for the work of the Council of Science and Industry they in the universities were entirely to forsake purely scientific investigations in favour of work on problems of applied science. The primary function must be the adequate training of those who were to go out to face such problems. A proper appreciation of the significance of the principles and development of any science, such as was requisite to those responsible for such training, and best, if not, indeed, solely, attained by actual work in furtherance of that science, and experience had repeatedly shown that graduates trained in the atmosphere of work of this character were readily and most successfully adaptable to the special problems of applied science. The present position in regard to the problem of molecular structure was therefore that they had good reasons to hope that not only was a firm basis available for the full development of the necessary theory, but that means were at hand for such developments. It might be anticipated that this would occur in two main directions. On one hand, the intricate structure of carbon compounds required further elucidation; on the other further knowledge was required of the nature of the less definite forms of combination responsible for the phenomena of absorption, catalysis, and molecular association.

### SYNTHETIC DRUG INDUSTRY.

In the pharmacy section the presidential address was delivered by Mr. A. T. S. Sissons (director of the Victorian College of Pharmacy), who took as his subject "The indebtedness of pharmacy to

organic chemistry." When the composition and structure of a natural drug had been determined, he said, attempts could be made to synthesize it and then to produce it artificially. Thus the synthetic drug industry was founded on theoretical organic chemistry. Not only were compounds identical with natural drugs produced by manufacturing processes, but attempts had been made to improve on natural drugs, or to produce effective but cheaper substitutes. Modern medicine utilized a very large number of synthetic hypnotics, anaesthetics, antipyretics, and antiseptics, the production of which at reasonable cost was due to the rapid development of the science of organic chemistry. Methods of manufacture were constantly changing, and well-known medicinal substances were now being made by new methods and from fresh sources. The chemical laboratory was producing medicinal products that in number and purity surpassed natural products. Advance in the development of the synthetic drug industry was dependent on progress in chemistry for the preparation of the drug, and on the progress of biochemistry for information about the action of the drug in the body. The final object of such study was the replacement of much that was still empirical in medicine by a rational and scientific therapeutics.

REG. 26.8.26

## COLLEGE OF SURGEONS.

### To be Established in Australia

SYDNEY, Wednesday.

Australia is to have a college of surgeons, which will advance the study of the science and art of surgery, establish laboratories, museums, libraries, and journals, and elevate the practice of surgery in hospitals and in private.

A convention of medical men, representing all the States of the Commonwealth and New Zealand, is meeting in Sydney to consider the undertaking, and to arrange details in readiness for the Australian Medical Congress, which, in Dunedin next year, will formally inaugurate the college.

The delegates to the convention, which commenced its sittings to-night, include Dr. Herbert (New Zealand), Sir George Syme and Dr. Kenny (Vic.), Drs. Simpson Newland and Bronte Smeaton (S.A.), Dr. Sandes (Professor of Anatomy at the University of Sydney), and Dr. R. B. Wade (immediate past President of the B.M.A. (N.S.W.)). Drs. W. N. Robinson, and Gibson (Queensland).

Probably the first President of the college will be Sir George Syme, the leading Melbourne surgeon, who has been keenly interested in the project since it was first outlined some time ago.

To-night, it is understood, the contention discussed the broad principle of the constitution and the appointment of foundation members, of whom there will be about 40. There will be another sitting to-morrow, and probably again on Friday. Generally, the opinion of leading medical men is that the organization should combine the best features of the British colleges with the practical advantages of the American system which embraces Canada, the United States, and South America. The new college will consider many problems, among them perhaps the pressing difficulty of giving surgical service to the scattered populations of Australia and New Zealand. It will face to the question of overcoming the disadvantages Australia suffers in being so far from modern surgical thought in the old and the new world.

REG. 26.8.26

## THE UNIVERSITY JUBILEE.

### And Its Aftermath.

By the Rev. F. Slaney Poole, M.A. The captains and the kings have departed, the wise and learned men who have just been our honoured visitors have either returned to their own special work or have journeyed westward to the great assembly to be held in Perth in connection with the Advancement of Science. I should like to think that one of the lessons which they have taught us is that we should take a broad and comprehensive view of the work which the University is, by its very name, called upon to perform. I like to think—and I do not think I am wrong—that in the making of the England of to-day the ancient universities and schools, great and small, have played a very large part in building up the character of Englishmen. It is this character which has been transplanted to Australia, and let it be said, that it was largely founded on and developed by the studies which are

known as the "humanities," and it is not a little noteworthy that the present Prime Minister of Great Britain, like Lord Oxford and the majority of the Prime Ministers in recent times, is a classical scholar, that is that his studies have been based on the humanities.

### Danger to Democracy.

These are not so generally followed by the present as by former generations, and a leading speaker at the recent Special Congregation uttered a word of warning against the professionalizing of the University to the exclusion, or partial exclusion of general culture. Mr. Baldwin, the Prime Minister, speaking of the classics, declared that he had derived from them "some sense of proportion, a standard of values, and a profound respect for the truth of words." Elsewhere he says—"If there is any class to be regarded with suspicion in a democracy it is the rhetorician—the man who plays on half-educated people with fallacies which they are incapable of detecting, and it is a class which it would seem democracy in all periods, finds it easy to produce. Indeed the great danger which threatens democracy is the spirit of exaggeration so easily provoked in times of political strife and passion. At such periods one hears language used by one side against the other which cannot possibly be taken at its true worth; all virtue is denied, and every vice attributed to the other side in order to tickle the ears of the groundlings, and the speaker will feel unconscious of any wrong if only he can obtain a vote in his favour."

### Value of General Culture.

It would be a great gain to Australia if it were possible that those who have had the advantage of a University education would consider it a duty to take part in public affairs, for he is familiar with the storied records of the past, is able to evaluate suggested nostrums and the wild theories of the man in the street; he has heard before of "the gods of the market place," and the loud-voiced demagogue has been familiar to his ears ever since he made acquaintance with Aristophanes. The one unchanging factor in human life is man himself; in all ages and in all countries he remains unaltered, even the rude unlettered mob can be counted on to act "according to place," and thus he, to whom the story of mankind is familiar will rate at their proper value the roaring of the crowd, or the stage thunder of the orator.

### Work to be Done.

It is the tendency, more, I think, than it used to be, to live in sections; class by class; trades by trades; professions by professions; life in these rapid days of ours is certainly strenuous, and we become prone to limit our association to the class or profession to which we belong; there seems no time for any extraneous efforts, and thus, by the very pressure of our affairs we are forced to be specialists, each in our own domain. This is impressed upon me by my own experience. In former days—I am speaking of 50 or 60 years ago—it was almost expected that any member of what are known as the learned professions would be, in addition to his professional acquirements, well informed on subjects outside of his calling; he was generally well read, and mixed more freely than he does now with other people; in the present-day competition is so keen and the work so arduous that it seems to be impossible to involve oneself in outside interests; but, if democracy is to be made safe for the world, those who possess light and have the power of leading must find the time to give such counsel or warning as the exigencies of the times require. It would, I think, be in harmony with the work of the University if, in places where it is possible for such a thing to be done, the University men should form themselves into a sodality for the consideration and discussion of those questions—not mere party questions—on which wise and skilled knowledge might formulate opinions and offer counsel. Such a body might also interest itself in finding out the brighter intelligences in their neighbourhoods and so helping them that it shall not be said of them:—

That knowledge to their eyes her ample page  
Rich with the spoils of time, did ne'er unroll;

Chill Penury repressed their noble rage  
And froze the genial current of the soul.

MAIL 4.9.26

### New Composers

Many new local composers came to light at the meeting of the Conservatorium Students' Association on Monday evening, and their musical status ranged from the Director (Dr. E. Harold Davies) to young students. Among the latter was Miss Miriam Hyde, a pianist in her earliest teens, who contributed as her compositions three preludes, a waltz, and a caprice, playing the numbers herself. Miss Hyde is a Public Examinations scholar at the Conservatorium, and received the whole of her former musical education from her mother, a cultured pianist, who was formerly Miss Muriel Gmeiner. There is nothing of the infant prodigy about Miriam Hyde, as she has been wisely trained in that school of commonsense, which has ensured her musical development proceeding along natural lines. She is a child of strong character, which is evident in her work. She is possessed of great musical gifts, but retains a childish reticence and an unassuming charm, which are refreshing in these days of self-confidence and pushfulness.