

**AUSTRALIA'S POPULATION PROBLEMS.**

Professor Hancock's interesting address on "Changes in Australia" at the conference of the Women's Non-Party Association the other day directed attention to several national tendencies which raise important problems. The Commonwealth, as the professor said, is remarkable among new countries both for its urbanisation and its racial homogeneity. Of these phenomena we may say, quoting the French phrase, that the more they change, the more they are the same thing, for the tendencies in both directions, apparent when we federated, have since been maintained, and are now more marked than ever. Official statistics show that over 62 per cent. of the population of Australia consists of town dwellers. The urban proportion, as the professor said, is greater than in industrialised countries like Germany and America. Apparently he did not discuss its significance, but there can surely be no doubt that the relatively slow expansion of the rural population in a land of such immense area and almost illimitable possibilities of agricultural and pastoral development as Australia is not a healthy sign. In politics the existence of the Country Party is explained by it. It would seem that under almost any conditions, in new and old countries alike, town life offers more attractions to the majority of people than rural settlement, but in Australia they have been abnormally increased by the protectionist and industrial laws of the Commonwealth.

We have more reason to be proud of our racial homogeneity than of the excessive urbanising tendency. Probably, however, the two things are not unconnected, since we are drawing from stock which hardly includes among its many invaluable qualities an increasing devotion to rural pursuits. Indeed, one of our difficulties in dealing with migration is to obtain just the class of agricultural settlers we require. The urbanised population of the mother country is not so rich in them that she has a great surplus to spare for the Dominions. In 1900 Australians, said Professor Hancock, were 95 per cent. British; to-day they are 98 per cent. And the policy of the Commonwealth, as the Prime Minister has repeatedly declared, is to maintain this pronounced British ascendancy in the population. We are holding Australia in trust as the future home mainly of the Anglo-Saxon race. Yet it cannot be denied that we have found real advantage from admixture with some alien strains, principally the German immigrants of the early days. It is only against unassimilable elements from the East that we entirely close our doors.

Professor Hancock remarks that our racial homogeneity has found expression in our policy of racial exclusion. That policy "has been accepted by the world as a reasonable one, and consequently has been challenged by no single Power." Our chief concern, he adds, should now be to retain our reasonable attitude on this question; otherwise we may bring the whole policy into jeopardy. Perhaps the professor does not regard as a "challenge" to the White Australia principle the attempt made by Japan in the League of Nations to secure an international acceptance of the doctrine of "racial equality." With that doctrine Australia has no quarrel. We do not say that the Japanese are not equal to the white races of the West; we only say, as Herbert Spencer said when warning Japan against European immigration forty years or more ago, that the differences are too great to admit of a useful amalgamation. Spencer contended that the mingling of European and Asiatic blood would make "a bad hybrid." We are concerned, of course, with the economic as well as with the racial aspect of immigration from the Orient, and in dealing with the whole question of a White Australia we take our stand on the elementary right of every nation to control the composition of its population according to its own ideas. But in doing this we ought, no doubt, to be "reasonable"—that is to say, it is our duty and our interest to be respectful of the susceptibilities of other nations and conciliatory in our methods. The action Japan took to obtain a "gentlemen's agreement" with the United States showed clearly that

her objection to American policy was addressed not so much to the limitation placed on the immigration of her nationals as to a policy which appeared to brand them with racial inferiority. It is not only good manners, but good policy, for Australia to treat a high-spirited, clever, and martial people like the Japanese with the respect and courtesy they certainly deserve, on account both of their character and the services they have rendered to the cause of civilisation. There is no reason in the world, while our own White Australia principle is uncontested, why we should not be the best of friends with the Japanese and all other Asiatic peoples.

The population of Australia, states Professor Hancock, is increasing relatively faster than that of any other country in the world except New Zealand. The truth, not generally recognised, is that although the Commonwealth birth-rate is low, the death-rate is still lower, so that the rate of natural increase in Australia is one of the highest in the world. Even as regards immigration, the professor regards the position as much more satisfactory than is generally recognised. All that has happened since the war, he says, is that we have tried to find some relation between the flow of immigrants and the capacity of the country to absorb them. In support of this assertion may be cited the provisions of the migration agreement accepted by all the States, the object being to associate settlement schemes with the introduction of assisted immigrants. But even this policy is being strongly resisted by one of the great political parties, on the mistaken ground that immigration of any kind must accentuate the existing evil of unemployment. Statistical enquiry has shown that unemployment has been greatest when immigration has been at the minimum, and vice versa. Although the natural increase of population in the Commonwealth is exceptionally rapid, it should be obvious that a new country with an enormous area to be developed requires a greater expansion of population than can be obtained from this source alone. There is no justification for the tremendous expenditure of borrowed money by Commonwealth and States on railways, water supplies, and other public works intended to open up the resources of the country and augment the national wealth, unless there is something like an equivalent increase in the population which has to bear the heavy load of debt, and in the volume of production with which our domestic and oversea liabilities must be met. From this standpoint, as well as from that of national defence, the position with regard to the population of the Commonwealth is not satisfactory.

The interesting particulars concerning Professor Sir William Bragg, K.B.E., D.Sc., F.R.S., president-elect of the British Association of Science, published in "The Advertiser" on Wednesday, writes "Wilfrid," recall the fact that, not only are Sir William and his distinguished son, Professor W. Lawrence Bragg, Fellows of the Royal Society—probably the most coveted honor in the scientific world—but that Sir William's father-in-law, the late Sir Charles Todd, K.C.M.G., for many years Postmaster-General of South Australia, was also a Fellow of the Royal Society. One wonders whether this is not a unique instance of the Fellowship of the Royal Society having been held by three successive generations of the same family. It should say that the award of the Nobel Prize for physics in 1915 to the two Professors Bragg is the only instance where this great honor has come to father and son. Since then other notable awards in the scientific world, chiefly for their work in connection with X-rays and crystals, have been made conjointly to Sir William and his brilliant son, who by the way served four years in France during the war as technical adviser on sound ranging, and was decorated with the M.C. and O.B.E. It is a remarkable coincidence that Professor Horace Lamb, LL.D., F.R.S., whom the elder Bragg succeeded in the Chair of Mathematics and Physics in the University of Adelaide early in 1886, should have been made a Fellow of the Royal Society, and have preceded his successor at Adelaide in the presidency of the British Association by three years. Sir Ernest Rutherford, F.R.S., who preceded the younger Bragg as Langworthy Professor of Physics in the University of Manchester, was president of the British Association in 1923, and the celebrated New Zealander was followed in the presidency of the association at the Toronto meeting the next year by that great Australian, Major-General Sir David Bruce, K.C.B., D.Sc., F.R.S., who was born in Melbourne in 1855, and graduated in medicine in Edinburgh.

ADV. 6.7.28

**HALFORD ORATION.**

**Family's Generous Gift.**

CANBERRA, Thursday. The Minister for Health (Sir Neville Howse) has approved the acceptance of the generous offer of the members of the family of the late Professor G. B. Halford to found an annual oration in connection with the National Museum of Australina Zoology.

The first professor of the Melbourne Medical School was George Britton Halford, M.D., who held the chairs of anatomy, physiology, and pathology. He began the teaching of anatomy in Melbourne in 1863 with three medical students and two medical practitioners, and thus laid the foundations of the first medical school in the southern hemisphere, which now ranks among the foremost in the world. This was an important event in the national history of the Australian Commonwealth. Professor Halford died in 1910 at the age of 86 years, and with a view of honouring his memory and advancing the interests of medical science generally the members of his family—which includes two medical practitioners, Dr. G. B. Halford, of Melbourne, and Dr. A. Halford, of Brisbane—have decided to found a lectureship. For this purpose they are presenting £1,000 to the Federal Government through the Federal Department of Health. The oration will be given annually at the National Museum of Australian Zoology at Canberra, and the first will be delivered on November 26 next.

When Professor Halford in 1862 was appointed to take charge of the medical school in Melbourne by Sir Richard Owen and Sir James Paget (two of the world's most distinguished medical scientists) he had already attracted the attention of the heads of the medical world by his original researches on cases of sounds of the heart. He is best known in Australia on account of his original work on the action of snake poison, the condition of blood after snake poisoning, and the ammonia treatment. He also carried out many investigations on anatomy and into the peculiarities of Australia aboriginal skulls.

Sir Neville Howse stated that the family of the late Professor Halford were to be congratulated on the endowment of the lectureship in honour of their distinguished father.

ADV. 6.7.28

**ACCOUNTANCY.**

**THE PROFESSION IN AUSTRALIA.**

**ROYAL CHARTER GRANTED.**

Canberra, July 5. The Prime Minister's department has received a cablegram from the Secretary of State for the Dominions, stating that a royal charter was granted on June 19, 1928, to the Australasian Corporation of Public Accountants.

The effect of the grant of the royal charter will be to raise the accountancy profession in Australia to a similar plane to that which it has attained in Great Britain, and make it possible for an Australian accountant to obtain a diploma recognised all over the world, enabling him to carry out his duties under the best auspices, at all times and at all places throughout the Empire. The grant of this charter also places the responsibility upon the Australasian Corporation of Public Accountants to see that the accountancy profession maintains a standard of conduct and training for its members equal to that insisted upon by the chartered societies of Great Britain.

Major R. D. Furse and Mr. R. L. Robinson, two of the British delegates to the Empire Forestry Conference, arrived in Sydney by the Ventura on Thursday. Both are members of the Board of Governors of the Empire Forestry Institute. Mr. Robinson, who is also a member of the Forestry Commission, said they would assist the Australian authorities in organising the conference, the sittings of which would begin in Perth, and after visiting the Australian capitals would move on to New Zealand. Mr. Robinson was the South Australian Rhodes scholar of 1905, and secured a first class diploma in forestry and the Burdett Coutts scholarship. He was in the Oxford cricket eleven for two years, represented that university in athletics and lacrosse on several occasions. Major Furse served with the King Edward Light Horse, in which many Australians were enrolled. Lord Clinton, the chairman of the British Forestry Commission, will arrive in Australia by the Orama, and Lord Lovat a former chairman, will come later. Delegates from twelve countries will be present at the conference.

**The Register.**

ADELAIDE: SATURDAY, JULY 7, 1928.

**THE LOVE OF BOOKS.**

An account of learning in the fourteenth century depicts "a host of unhappy scholars," who, being endowed with the capacity of a subtle intellect and wishing to pursue a course of learning, yet "with poverty only as their stepmother," owing to want of books, they are "repelled violently from the nectared cup of philosophy as soon as they have tasted of it." "Though fit for the liberal arts they return to the mechanical arts solely to gain a livelihood" with a consequent loss of their services to letters and learning. And so Sir Richard de Bury, the eminent Bishop of Durham, "resigning all thoughts of other earthly things," gave himself up to a passion for acquiring books, which he bequeathed to Oxford for the common benefit of scholars. Richard de Bury was one of the first of the great English book collectors, whose greatest joy was to surround himself with books, but whose enjoyment was not purely selfish, in that it led him to think of these poor scholars, and in an age when books were scarce and worth their weight in gold, to direct that his treasures should be placed at the service of the public for ever.

The offer made by Sir Josiah Symon to bequeath his books to the public of Adelaide follows the tradition of the great collections of the world, which have been built up by public funds, but which would be vastly poorer were it not for such generous gifts and bequests made by public-spirited men. In England there was no national library until as late as 1753, when Parliament was moved to supply accommodation for the great collection of manuscript formed by Robert Cotton, who wished it to be preserved for the use of historians for all time, and to acquire, at a price which was so small as to make it virtually a gift, the library of Edward Harley, Earl of Oxford, also consisting mainly of manuscripts. These collections, with the gift of the Royal Library, formed the nucleus of the British Museum, which was soon strengthened by the Sloane collection of books and his vast number of natural history objects—animal, vegetable, and mineral—also Egyptian, Greek, Etruscan, Roman, British, and American antiquities. These were purchased, but again at a price so small in comparison with their value, as to constitute a gift. From that time the British Museum has grown until, by purchase and gift, it possesses the largest library in the world, with books numbering from three and a half to four millions. Many of the gifts have enabled it to make up for the two hundred years or so which