

Tenth Degree Awarded

The University authorities have accepted the thesis of Mr. Russell Dumas for the degree of Master of Engineering. Mr. Dumas, who is at present in charge of a large irrigation scheme for the Western Australian Government, already holds the degree of Bachelor of Engineering from the Adelaide University, and is also a Fellow of the South Australian School of Mines. This is the tenth M.E. degree issued by the Adelaide University since its establishment.

The examiners, upon whose report the degree is to be awarded, were Professors Chapman and Kerr Grant, and the thesis was on the design of high masonry dams.

Mr. Dumas joined the South Australian Government service in 1910, and was engaged on surveys and construction work in connection with the South-Eastern drainage scheme, as assistant to the late Mr. O. H. Rogers. He enlisted in 1915, and gained a commission with the A.I.F. Field Engineers in France, where he served until the end of the war, being twice wounded.

On returning to Australia, he was appointed Assistant Resident Engineer under Mr. R. C. Cutting, the construction expert brought from America to supervise the building of the first lock on the River Murray at Blanchetown. After a year's experience in this capacity, he was appointed Resident Engineer, and carried out the construction of No. 3 Lock, and preliminary work in connection with No. 2 Lock. In 1925 he left South Australia to supervise, on behalf of the West Australian Government, the construction of proposed reservoirs for the City of Perth.

Churchman's Brook Reservoir was built under his supervision, and the pipe line and preliminary work in connection with the Canning dam was also carried out under him. He was responsible also for the design of the Canning dam, with a capacity of 16,000,000 gallons. Shortage of loan funds prevented the completion of this work. Mr. Dumas also supervised the construction of the Waroona dam and the Harvey dam, with its attendant irrigation works.

He has recently been carrying out investigations in connection with the very large Collier irrigation scheme, which, if proceeded with, will include the construction of a reservoir with a capacity nearly twice that of Millbrook. He is senior vice-president of the Perth division of the Institution of Engineers, and a corporate member of the Institution of Civil Engineers, London.

Burdens on Learning

IN the past Labor candidates have advocated that education should be free to the university stage. But by its primage duties and taxation on books the Scullin Government is preventing the importation to Australia of literature which is absolutely essential to education of any kind.

The Royal Society of South Australia spends practically the whole of its income in publishing the records of research work done in the State. These are exchanged for volumes published by similar institutions in other parts of the world. Although the books are not sold and are made available to students without charge, the Federal Government insists on collecting primage duties and sales tax. The consequence has been that the society has had to notify kindred organisations that it will be unable to accept gifts of books because it is not in a position to pay the preposterous charges.

Prof. T. Harvey Johnston (president of the society) has pointed out that the library of a scientific institution is to its members what working tools are to the artisan. For research work it is necessary for scientists to be familiar with results of investigations in other parts of the world, and they have to keep constantly in touch with the Public Library, the Museum, and the libraries of the Royal Society and the University of Adelaide. "This is the worst blow of all—a direct tax on knowledge by the Government of a democratic country," said the professor.

Mr. R. G. Segnit (secretary) stated that dozens of volumes had accumulated at the post office since he had been authorised to refuse them by the council of the Royal Society. He restamped the price of issue in the country of origin. On these values duties are assessed, and they amount to about one-third of the cost.

Students in medicine have been also badly hit

Continued  
by the charges. Expenses of undergraduates—already high—have been greatly increased. They have to buy several textbooks each year, and these cannot be sold at the end of the course because they rapidly become out of date.

And so it goes on throughout the whole realm of scientific research. It seems that the Commonwealth Government, instead of encouraging education, is endeavoring to place obstacles in the way of those who are attempting to increase the sum of human knowledge. This amounts almost to putting a premium on illiteracy.

CHECK TO WORKERS' EDUCATION

Taxes Stop Book Buying

Workers have paused in their march towards greater knowledge, because their purchasing powers have been restricted by the high prices which have followed the additional primage duties, and taxation on books, imposed by the Federal Government; and because the same duties have forced the Workers' Educational Association to mark time in its campaign to add good works to its library.

"The measures are hitting the sons and daughters of working men hard," said the secretary of the association (Mr. G. McRitchie) yesterday. "Our ability to buy new works has been badly hampered. If the association spends £100 now it gets a much smaller return, and, in common with every other similar body, its revenue has not increased. Many of the members and students have to struggle to obtain money for their lectures and books, and the move has loaded them with additional difficulties. The association was beginning to become proud of its representative library; now it means that progress must be retarded. One is amazed at such action by a Labor Government."

An inspection of the library reveals its high educational value, and a glance at the curriculum of the association shows how valuable is the scholastic work done for those unable to find the finance or time to take a University course. Also there are students whose expenses have been sponsored by their parents—often at great sacrifice—because they are unemployed. Mr. McRitchie said that there were many who had been utilising their enforced inactivity by studying only to find that their efforts to improve their knowledge had received a severe check.

Charged Nearly 20 Per Cent.

Duties and taxes now levied amount to 3/11 in the £, Mr. McRitchie explained. The rate was arrived at by the compound interest system of compilation, and instead of being 16 per cent. on the price, the rate was nearly 20 per cent.

"Students say frankly that they cannot afford to buy books," he said. "There is only one result. Their education stops. It costs 65 per cent. on the cost of books in London to land them here. There is 30 per cent. for exchange, 20 per cent. primage and taxation, and 15 per cent. for expenses. It is a direct tax on learning, an iniquitous move, and one that is going to have a detrimental effect on the educational standard of the whole community."

Testing Aborigines

WITH several other visitors I attended the meeting of the Anthropological Society at the University on Monday evening, when members of the University and Museum staffs who comprised the party which recently conducted the research work at Cockatoo Creek gave brief accounts of their investigations. Mr. H. M. Hale (Director of the Museum), who is the president of the society, occupied the chair. Dr. T. D. Campbell told the story of the organisation of the party and gave a general review of the work. Professor Hicks explained how he and Dr. Rex Matters carried out the physiological tests and staged the apparatus with which the data was secured. The tests were made early in the morning, and the blacks were amazingly good subjects. Professor Hicks said the results revealed the fact that the aborigines physiologically are more normal than we white civilised people are.



Mr. H. M. Hale

Blood and Mental Tests

PROFESSOR Cleland told how the blood tests were taken and compared the ruling factors with those of Western European and Asiatic people. Dr. Fry reviewed the mental tests and referred to the vagueness of the minds of these primitive people. He likened the swiftness with which the natives track to the rapidity with which educated people read a book. Dr. Palleine, who examined the noses, ears and throats of the children referred to the abnormally broad nostril, which would give us a dry throat, and to the small tonsils of the aborigines. Mr. Hale who, with Mr. Tindale, took the plaster moulds of the faces and busts, paid a tribute to the extraordinarily submissive black subjects. He said they were infinitely better than Dr. Campbell, on whom they first practised. (Laughter). Professor Wilkinson presented a very interesting series of lantern slides showing photographs of the various members of the party at work, the blacks in camp, and carrying out their corroborees, and the character of the country. All had a word of praise for Mr. Cramer, who was the guide, philosopher and friend of the expedition. I spent an evening where entertainment followed close on the heels of education, and on behalf of the visitors wish to express my thanks for the invitation to be present. This research work has a world wide interest in scientific circles, and its value cannot be overestimated. What a pity those people who govern us do not know their job as well as these men who with all their learning, are simple, modest, shy, and unassertive.

BOOK TAX AFFECTS ALL PROFESSIONS

Disturbing Legal Aspect

An unanswerable objection to the tariff which the Federal Government has placed on books is the obstruction it is proving to the extension of knowledge and education.

Yesterday an illustration of what the restrictions on book-buying means to the legal profession was given by Mr. R. N. Finlayson, former lecturer in law at the University, and editor of the State Law Reports.

"No lawyer can exist without his library, and each solicitor's office must have its own private library," he said. "So many books are in constant use, so little can be done without reference to them, that no central library, such as that at the Supreme Court, however complete, can be effectually substituted for a personal set. The practising lawyer must not only have his library, but he must be prepared to keep it up to date, and he must keep himself conversant with the latest developments, too. It is essential that he should have a certain number of the law reports and text books which are published each year. The changes and accumulations of law have their own special literature. If this is inaccessible, or is difficult to obtain, lawyers are handicapped, clients suffer, and eventually the administration of justice suffers."

Might Mean Wrong Judgment

What drastic consequences the absence of a book from the Supreme Court library can have was revealed when Mr. Finlayson recalled the remarks in court of a former Chief Justice. "The absence of a book at the critical moment of a trial might make all the difference between a conviction and an acquittal of a criminal—possibly that of a murderer," said the judge.

Mr. Finlayson stated that some volumes were indispensable, but present prices made it increasingly difficult to procure them.

"It must not be forgotten that Australian law is founded almost entirely on English," he said. "The practising lawyer draws 80 per cent. of his knowledge from English books. It is idle to suggest that any but a small proportion of the necessary works can be produced in Australia. The smallness of demand, to mention one consideration only, excludes the possibility. To those imported from England—and law books are not cheap—the rate of exchange must be added. Then there is the sales tax, and primage. It is not to be wondered that lawyers are looking around to see what books can be done without."