

Board

Board

the language in which the value of insulin is called in question is not altogether convincing; and reasonable people will feel justified in preferring a deliberate record of facts presented by a scientist who is unquestionably better fitted than any one else in Australia to say whether insulin is, or is not, all that has been claimed for it.

To Professor Robertson himself belongs much of the credit for the fact that the benefit of Dr. Banting's discovery were made available in Adelaide long before the "daily press," to use the words of The Medical Journal, "was responsible for the boosting of the new, ill-understood treatment." Many South Australian sufferers from diabetes, says Professor Robertson, had the benefit of insulin treatment only a few months later than their fellow-sufferers in Canada, where Dr. Banting's great discovery was made. "Until very recently insulin has not been obtainable in any city in the Commonwealth excepting Adelaide." It is probable, therefore, that insulin was a familiar specific in the laboratories of the Adelaide University long before the author of the article in The Medical Journal had had an opportunity to form any conclusions whatever on this important question. It is possible to attribute to excessive conservatism—if not to a well-entrenched spirit of intolerance peculiarly ill-suited to the reception of scientific truth—his sweeping dictum—"a considerable period will have to elapse before the full therapeutic significance of this

patented preparation can be ascertained. In the meantime, no doubt, hundreds of diabetics will be hastened to their graves by its means." This is a sensational statement unsupported by mention of any single instance of the misuse of insulin; and it is impossible to avoid the impression that no such alarming generalization should have been penned by any responsible writer, in face of the fact vouched for by Professor Robertson, that in America 5,000 diabetics are being treated with insulin, and that no case of fatal aggravation of the disease has yet been reported.

The case for insulin, however, rests upon positive rather than upon negative results. Every case treated in Adelaide has been benefited, and some, Professor Robertson declares, "to a most remarkable degree." The experiences recorded by investigators and physicians in England and elsewhere are exactly similar; indeed, so unanimous has been the favourable testimony of many of the most eminent medical authorities in all parts of the world, that it is difficult to understand the excessively apprehensive tone in which The Medical Journal discusses the question, or to see sufficient justification for the statement—"During the stage of trial of a powerful and dangerous remedy, medical practitioners who do not possess facilities for close observation and continuous control will be well advised to refuse to bear the responsibility." Professor Robertson's answer is that when the drug is correctly standardized and administered by a qualified physician, its use involves no danger whatever. The Medical Journal apprehends a "tragedy" as a result of the widespread employment of insulin. It would be a tragedy, indeed, if public confidence were undermined sufficiently to restrict the full and proper employment of a remedy from which humanity not reasonably expects so much benefit.

PRESERVING WILD LIFE

TOUR BY PROFESSOR WOOD-JONES.

Professor Wood-Jones, of the Adelaide University, and Dr. T. D. Campbell, of the Dental Hospital, have returned from a collecting tour in the far north, bringing with them a number of kangaroo rats, birds, insects, spiders, and implements used by the natives. The University authorities have placed a sum at the disposal of Professor Wood-Jones for the purpose of collecting Australian specimens, and from the kangaroo rats he hopes to raise a colony which may be used in replacing the animals on Kangaroo Island and other places where they are now extinct.

The scientists went to Kingoonya, on the East-West line, then to Stuart Ranges by motor, and a week was spent in camp on the tablelands. The professor stated on Tuesday that birds were plentiful in the saltbush country, and 28 which he brought back will be handed to the Museum. They include three rare specimens of Iradale tit-warbler, the chestnut-breasted whiteface, and the desert field wren. A large number of insects and spiders were also collected.

A number of aborigines were encountered, and the opportunity was taken to secure the anthropological measurements of five men and three women of one tribe. Stuart Ranges are noted for an opal field, and a number of specimens were brought back.

The collection made by the professor is not for scientific purposes. His object is to preserve native wild life and to assist it by breeding and acclimatisation.

public opinion was content with this advance. If for the protection of society it was necessary to retain a man in prison, at least his enforced stay, it was argued, might be made relatively tolerable. If denied the joys of intercourse with his fellows, he had at least such compensation as could be extracted from a wholesome if not extremely varied or liberal diet, and from work not so arduous as to imperil the health. The theory was that during the golden years he was spending in confinement the outside world was morally improving, so that the time would come when the inherent badness of human nature would disappear before steady social progression, and the problem of the criminal would be solved by his disappearance. Gradually a distrust in the speedy coming of the millennium showed itself in this direction as in others. The whirligig of time and change might at some dim and distant epoch relegate gaols and criminal courts to the limbo of memory, but meanwhile they continued to force themselves unpleasantly on the attention, and as Professor Phillipson admirably shows, with the growth of democracy their relation to every day society became more clearly apparent. There was a growing perception that the sufferer from the depredations of the criminal classes was not "Our Sovereign Lord the King," but the people to whom the prevention of crime was of much greater importance than its punishment.

From this stage of popular thought the science of criminology, which has flooded the world with a literature of its own, may be said to have dated; and the aim of reformers has been to adopt the conclusions of the criminal branch of psychoanalysis in the practical treatment of the criminal. Reforms have sometimes suffered from their adoption in too half-hearted a way, as, for example, in the treatment of habitual offenders. The indeterminate sentence, as originally proposed by the penologists, has been interpreted by some lawmakers to mean that, after serving a specific sentence for his latest offence, the criminal shall enter upon a system of combined punishment and probation, the effects of which as revealed in his conduct will determine the time of his release. But the reformers have contemplated something more than segregation. The indeterminate sentence having a curative purpose was intended to be served under conditions much more lenient and humanising than those of the earlier period, and was only to be completed when the prisoner had qualified, by industrial education and otherwise, for going out into the world. The test of his fitness for liberty was to be the formation of habits of industry, and the attainment of skill in some handicraft, the possession of which tends more than anything else to develop the self-reliant and self-regulating elements of human character, to eliminate the tendency to crime, and to create an inclination for earning a livelihood in the methodical manner ruling in society. With commendable persistency prison reformers have kept their minds steadily concentrated on the truth that the greater number of prisoners have drifted into crime for want of any satisfactory industrial training, and so far as our own State is concerned they are looking for some recognition of this in the legislation promised by the present Government. The establishment of something like a prison farm in the South-East, where those employed will be brought under the influence of a healthier and more interesting environment than is to be found at Yatala, has been rightly described by Mr. Edwards—apropos of his motion in the Assembly "that a system of prison reform be introduced"—as a step in the right direction. In New South Wales the forest work at Tuncurry has been highly praised for its effect on the men. The reformation of the criminal is not, as often supposed, a matter that concerns humanitarians alone. It has an economic side to which the taxpayer cannot afford to be indifferent. The £31,673 of which Mr.

Schomburgk speaks in his latest report as having been spent in the maintenance and control of the prisons last year is far from representing the total cost of our penal administration, including, as it does, the maintenance of police, judges, and magistrates; and including as it also does, the invisible and incalculable cost which is represented by the depredations of the criminal and the precautions that must be taken more or less by every citizen to safeguard his person and property. On grounds so experimental rapid progress cannot be looked for; but in a well-known essay Herbert Spencer has thrown out suggestions which have never received the attention they deserve, not the least important being an extension of the probationary system so that its operation would not be wholly dependent on the judgment of the officer world might have formed of a prisoner. The judgment reputable people previously acquainted with him may have formed of his character would be a much safer guide than an opinion founded wholly on his behaviour under the unnatural conditions of prison life; and if these people are prepared, under some pecuniary penalty, should their judgment be mistaken, to say that a man who has served a substantial part of his sentence may safely be at large on probation, we might be spared some of those cases of unnecessary detention affecting the repute of our prison administration to which attention was called in Parliament last week.

6 SEP 1923

The Advertiser

ADELAIDE: THURSDAY.
SEPTEMBER 6, 1923.
CRIMINAL REFORM.

Those who condemn, not without some reason, the orthodox prison system as an outrage on common sense, a mode of treatment that too often exacerbates the evil it professes to remedy, may be congratulated on the endorsement of their view by a growing public opinion. In all civilised countries there has long been a tendency to restrain the punitive arm of the law and emphasise the reformative aspect of imprisonment. Not before it had been long needed did an improvement in penological methods come; indeed it may be said to have had its real beginning within the lifetime of the present generation. In his interesting lecture on the subject on Tuesday evening Professor Coleman Phillipson included progress in this direction among the tests of civilisation. A deficiency in the sense of social interdependence which shows itself in the brutal treatment of the erring is very likely to have other manifestations as well. The execution by the law courts of Henry VIII. of 73,000 vagrants whom the closing of the monasteries had deprived of their bread was only one episode in the reign of a monarch whose name was a synonym for many other infamies. Had public opinion been more civilised in its treatment of social outlaws it would have been more civilised in other respects also, and the "English Blue Beard" would not have dared to flout it by playing fast and loose with the lives and happiness of his wives.

When penal administration was only another name for official brutality, it was a common saying that it created more criminals than it punished, a prison career being too often a training in crime. It was thought a great departure from the old penal system when it ceased to be regarded as necessary to include flogging and other modes of torture among the ordinary methods of prison discipline; and for a long time

Regulation

6 SEP 1923

The secretary of the Catherine Helen Spence Advisory Committee (Mr. C. G. Lewis) has received a further report from Miss Constance M. Davey, M.A., the second Catherine Helen Spence scholar, who is in England studying problems of psychology in relation to mental testing, with special application to mental deficiency and deficiency. During the last few months she has continued to attend lectures in general psychology in relation to mental tests, with experimental work under the direction of Professor Spearman in child psychology at Bedford College, and a special course of mental deficiency by Dr. Hadfield at King's College. A course of lectures to London County Council teachers on the work of mental testing and individual differences in children by Professor Spearman and Dr. Aveley has been most helpful to her, as under their direction she has been able to help in the practical side of the work. Miss Davey has continued her work in the giving of tests both to children in the schools and to old people in almshouses, and through the Institute of Industrial Psychology (organized by Dr. Myers, Cambridge and Dr. Cyril Burt) she has been able to get into touch with the work of vocational testing and the standardization of the Binet and Terman tests for London children. Miss Davey intends to remain another year in England before going to America for further experience. She hopes to leave for that country in next June or July, taking a brief intensive course at Columbia University. She expects to find opportunities for research work which will be of material value to South Australia on her return.