

**THE FORESTRY SCHOOL.**

MELBOURNE, Thursday.

The Minister for Home and Territories (Senator Pearce) expressed pleasure today at the success which has attended the opening of the forestry school at Adelaide. He stated that 16 students were already in attendance; four were free lance students, two had been nominated by the Western Australian Government, three were by New South Wales, five by Queensland, one by South Australia, and one was an officer of the South Australian Forestry Service. The Victorian Government had also announced its intention of sending two students to the school.

Before dispersing for the day the conference agreed to recommend to the respective universities that a conference to be arranged by the medical faculties should sit concurrently with the inter-university conference each year, to consider matters connected with the medical schools.

At 5 o'clock the conference adjourned until this morning. At night the delegates attended a dinner at the Hotel Windsor.

**VINEGROWERS' DINNER.**

**Eloquent Speeches.**

*inter alia*

Scientific Investigation.

Professor Osborn submitted "The viticultural industry." He said that it was a pleasure to attend their dinner. In South Australia they had at least 94 acres under vines for every 1,000 inhabitants, which was a record for the Commonwealth. Wine production, therefore, ranked as most important. When he had been born as a South Australian in 1912 there had been no exportable surplus of dried fruits, but during the last five years it had been just under a million pounds sterling. That, therefore, was a very fine child. This State should be congratulated upon their work at Berri. There was probably no existing state department or privately owned department which possessed such facilities for research work as in South Australia. There were problems in the viticultural industry, but who was to tackle them. The greatest need for the industrial development in Australia was the adequate supply of men interested in the development of scientific investigation. Their industry, as much as any other, owed much to that giant of the intellectual world, Louis Pasteur. (Applause.) It was a matter of sincere regret that the best part of their intelligences drifted to medicine and law instead of to biology. Yet Australia had a greater need for the last named. Under the new possibility of development he hoped that these disabilities would disappear. He was proud to be associated, even indirectly, with the viticultural industry. The newly constituted Council of Science and Industry would require the personal help of members of the viticultural industry.

Mr. Angove, in acknowledgment, said that the importance of the viticultural industry was great, because they relied upon agrarian results, wool, wheat, and dairying were looked upon as important, fruit and wine were big features.

A Voice—And they employ more labour! The Chairman said that they should look perhaps to some of the causes which had brought about increased production in Australia they had set a high standard of living, and to keep it depended entirely upon the ability of the population of the country to absorb their produce. Unless that could be done no great national industry could be built up unless an outlet were found overseas. In order to get that, they must solve the difficulties which increased production had given them. Australia had exported approximately 750,000 gallons. If there were practically a gallon used for the fortification of that wine, more than a million gallons were exported from South Australia, and the Excise Department had benefited considerably. The whole of this year's crop had been absorbed by the wineries. When they thought of the situation which faced the industry a couple of years ago, they would be thankful that it had been considerably improved to-day.

**INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE RENAMED.**

MELBOURNE, Friday.

The Minister for Markets and Migration (Senator Sir Victor Wilson) announced today that in accordance with the Federal Government's policy for the reorganization of the Institute of Science and Industry, the new title, "The Council for Scientific and Industrial Research," is being adopted forthwith. The main reasons which led to its selection are:—1. That it is explicit and will not lead to confusion with any other existing organization. 2. That it is similar to the titles of corresponding organizations in other parts of the Empire, such as the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research in Great Britain, and the Honorary Advisory Council for Scientific and Industrial Research in Canada.

**LESSONS LEARNED ABROAD.**

**THE TRAGEDY OF AN EXTINCT RACE.**

**ITS MEANING FOR SOUTH AUSTRALIA.**

IV.—By Frederic Wood-Jones.

This year of grace, 1926, marks an anniversary that none will care to keep in mind. It completes a jubilee that will remain uncelebrated. We take pride in remembering the anniversaries of our victories, of the days on which our heroes were born, or on which we won the right to do as little work as possible. But this jubilee is not of that kind. It marks a victory, it is true—the victory of death. It marks the final victory over a backward race; but it also marks the closing of what is probably the blackest page of British colonial history.

In 1876 the last member of the Tasmanian race died, and one more of the backward peoples was wiped from the face of the earth. There is no need to recall the whole pitiful story. How the end came every one knows, even if they do not care to recall it after the mellowing passage of half a century. Death did not come suddenly. In 1926 there were more than 200 living Tasmanians; in 1846, no more than 40; in 1856, only a dozen could be mustered; and, by 1876, all were dead.

Now, with the passage of time, it is easy to find excuses for this tragedy. Indeed, excuse making has become habitual in all writings dealing with the Tasmanian race. We may point to the backward state of development of the colony; we may blame the convicts for the numerous brutalities, and ask what better could be expected from such men at such a time, and in the particular circumstances. We may repeat the oft-told tale of the atrocities committed by the natives, and affirm that they were a bloodthirsty set of savages who perpetrated their devilries from in-born treachery and not from revenge for the white man's brutality; but if we do this we must disregard authentic and contemporary history, and must altogether discredit the observations of the French navigators. We may say that, anyhow, they were so low in the scale of humanity as to be outside the pale of man's recognised code of treatment of his fellow-men. But I have an idea that, wherever the white man comes in contact with a backward race, whose lands he is determined to possess, he finds excuse for his methods in the consoling thought that the owners of the soil are so little removed from animals that rules of conduct generally considered as human need not be applied to them.

**Lost Unread.**

In truth, no matter what excuses we may make, the extermination of the Tasmanian race is a very terrible blot on our colonial records, a tragedy by which a whole section of humanity was destroyed, first by sheer brutality, and then by neglect and mismanagement; a tragedy so recent that, although the race itself is dead, its diluted blood still lives within the limits of our State. The recent passing of a whole race must necessarily make appeal to the imagination of every humanitarian; but we must remember also that, with the passing of the race, there is lost, not only a section of our fellow-humanity, but a wonderful living document, and in this case the document is lost unread. We may unearth a papyrus and learn from its dead pages the secrets of the past, but with human beings this cannot be. We may study the most lasting portions of their bodies and the more permanent remains of their culture; but as human beings they are beyond our study. When the paleontologist reconstructs some long-extinct animal from its fossil remains, he may learn a great deal about the animal, though he cannot learn all; but with humanity this is not so, for that which makes it human is lost for ever with its passing. The Tasmanian race must remain an unsolved problem. We may determine its affinities by the characters of such skulls as we possess; we may make statements as to the stage of cultural development, but the real Tasmanian can never be known. That a race should be exterminated is a tragedy, and the tragedy becomes the greater when the final scene is enacted before any adequate study has been made of that race.

**Lost Chances.**

What would we not give to know the blood reactions of the Tasmanians, and the structural details of their nervous system and of the perishable portions of their bodies? Who would not welcome the chance to record more fully their habits, their customs, their beliefs, and their language? For ever their sensory perceptions, their range of colour vision, of sound discrimination, of musical appreciation, the whole of their thought processes and men-

tal reactions, must remain unknown. When we think how little a while it is since Tasmanian natives were living in the midst of educated white men, we cannot help resenting, not only the fact of their extermination, but the neglect of their study as living human beings. The science of anthropology must ever bear a grudge to the people among whom the Tasmanian natives passed into oblivion half a century ago.

Now here is a pathetic thing, that today no effort is too great to secure the last bone, the last flint flake, the last relic of any kind of this race that died neglected. Like the Great Auk's egg, the Tasmanian skull is a collector's prize; of a certain we cannot make too much fuss of him now he is dead, and if our estimation of a race may be argued from the market price of its skeletal remains, then there is no doubt that our appreciation of the Tasmanian race is a very real sentiment.

**Our Stewardship.**

It is easy to hate the sailorman who slew the last Great Auk; it is a natural thing that we should resent the action of those who failed to preserve the lives of the many beautiful creatures exterminated during our own lifetime; but we must have regard to our right to criticize. We may readily cast a stone at Tasmania in that her white colonists permitted the passing of an indigenous race and marked this passing with neglect; but there must come a question and a pause:—Is it we who may justly cast the stone? Tasmania may be called to account for its stewardship of its lost race; but we too are stewards of a backward people and we may also be called to give an account of our stewardship. Without doubt, we, too, should be found wanting. Were we asked what has been done to prevent the passing of the Australian aborigine I have no doubt a very complete account could be given of missionary enterprise, of garments bestowed, of Government rations, of flour and of blankets. We could point with pride to our civilizing efforts and forget the degradation, the disease, the death. We could instance our legal enactments and remain oblivious to their abundant failures. We could make a last effort at self-deception and make boast of our aboriginal reserves. Were we asked what we had done to study and to understand the aborigine while yet there is time, there is no doubt that a good case could be made out; we could point to books that have been written concerning the customs of the black fellow; and for books we have great regard. We could quote accounts of his ceremonies and point to photographic illustrations depicting corroborees and initiations, and we could say, "We have found out all this and have recorded it for all time." But, even if our defence should satisfy the unthinking, we must make it with the reservation that much that has been printed is the product of untrained, indiscriminating, and prejudiced observers. Many books have been written; many might, with some gain to science, be burned.

**What do We Know of the Blackfellow?**

It is a difficult thing, even for a trained observer, to learn of the intimate customs of any alien race. When we remember that the aborigine has all the complex psychology of a race that knows it is dispossessed and dying; when we remember that absolute secrecy, even within the limits of his own social unit, is the keynote of his cultural organization, we may readily believe that it is not the privilege of every untrained white man, who blunders among them with a series of impertinent leading questions, that he is at once, or at all, admitted to a complete revelation of their intimate beliefs and a divulgence of their tribal secrets. Any one who has had the least experience of attempting to learn from a blackfellow a fact of no more complexity than the use to which a particular type of stone implement is put, will appreciate the difficulty of fathoming the aboriginal mind. It is not that the questioner will remain unanswered. He will have a sufficiency of answers if he have a sufficiency of informants, and the task of writing his book will be the less as he restricts his enquiries, and as he makes them judiciously. The race that, with perfect simplicity, does not know any reason, or with equal facility knows a dozen incorrect reasons, for the fashioning of a simple cultural object, is not the one to unobscure itself lightly of the full and complete truth when questioned as to its most sacred beliefs and its most secret customs and ceremonies. That is why many books might just as well be burned, and why

**UNIVERSITIES CONFER.**

**MANY SUBJECTS DISCUSSED.**

**FEDERAL SUBSIDY SUGGESTED.**

The Australian inter-university conference, which is held annually in the different capital cities in turn, was opened in the professorial boardroom at the Melbourne University yesterday afternoon. The conference was attended by the following delegates from the respective State universities:—

MELBOURNE.—The Chancellor (Sir John MacFarland), Sir William Harrison Moore, Professor A. J. Ewart, Professor J. A. Gunn, Professor A. C. D. Rivett, Professor T. H. Laby, Mr. M. P. Hansen, Dr. J. P. Wilson, Professor R. S. Wallace, the registrar (Mr. J. P. Bainbridge), and the assistant registrar (Mr. Stanley Addison).

SYDNEY.—The Vice-chancellor (Sir Mungo MacCallum), Professor J. B. Peden, Sir Henry Barraclough, Professor H. S. Carslaw.

BRISBANE.—Professor J. Alcock and Professor H. S. Richards.

ADELAIDE.—The Vice-chancellor (Professor F. H. Renate), Professor H. Daruley Naylor, and Professor R. W. Chapman.

HOBART.—Professor R. L. Dunbabin, and Assistant Professor E. Morris Miller.

PERTH.—Professor W. Witfield, and the director of Education of Western Australia (Mr. Cecil Andrews).

Sir John MacFarland was voted to the chair.

The conference assembled at half-past 2 o'clock, and, on the motion of Professor Carslaw, it was decided that the deliberations should be conducted in private. Subsequently information regarding the proceedings was made available by the assistant registrar of the Melbourne University (Mr. Stanley Addison).

The first question discussed was that of uniformity of matriculation requirements, raised by the University of Tasmania. The subject was spoken to by the representatives of all the universities, who explained what their respective requirements and practices were. This question will be further debated.

A suggestion was made that the Federal Ministry should be asked to subsidise university education in the different States. A long discussion took place on this proposal, and finally it was decided, on the motion of Professor Laby, seconded by Professor Richards:—

"That the conference recommends to the different universities of Australia that they prepare information regarding the manner in which they consider a Federal subsidy could best be used in developing their work, and that they be asked to consider whether, in their opinions, representations should be made to the Federal Ministry in respect of such information, and that reports from the respective universities on the subject be brought up at the next meeting of the conference in 1927."

The conference also discussed the question of the proposal to establish a university at Canberra, but the nature of the discussion was not made public.

**Council of Scientific Research.**

The next subject dealt with was that of the Institute of Science and Industry, and its relation to the work done in the laboratories of the universities.

Professor Rivett said that the title of the former institute had been altered, and that it was now called the Council of Scientific Research. He made a general statement regarding the view of the council towards university work, and expressed a desire on behalf of the council that there should be close and cordial co-operation with the universities.

It was decided that a letter should be sent from the conference to the Prime Minister (Mr. Bruce) congratulating him on his Ministry on the appointment of the council, and stating that the conference believed that all the universities would do everything in their power to co-operate with the council.

Consideration was given to the proposal that additional facilities should be provided for the admittance to the Commonwealth and State public services of graduates of the universities. Representations on this subject were made after the meeting of the conference last year, and a reply from Mr. Bruce was read yesterday. It is decided that the vice-chancellor of the University of Sydney (Sir Mungo MacCallum) be asked to arrange a deputation to it on Mr. Bruce, and to urge and reinforce the arguments advanced in the earlier communication.