

An Authority on Agriculture.

Each year the Universities of Australia elect some distinguished scientist from abroad to visit the Commonwealth, and deliver a series of lectures at each of these scholastic institutions. This year the choice has fallen upon Sir Edward John Russell, O.B.E., D.Sc., F.R.S., Director of the Rothamsted Experimental Station, Harpenden, England, who will deliver two lectures in the Brookman Hall on June 2 and 3. His subjects will probably be "Science and Modern Farming," and "How it Began, and What it Has Done." A small charge will be made for admission.

Sir John Russell is a very distinguished scientist. He is the eldest son of the late Rev. E. T. Russell, and was born at Frampton-on-Severn, Gloucestershire, on October 31, 1872. He was educated at the University College of Wales, Aberystwyth, and the Victoria University, Manchester. He was subsequently appointed Lecturer and Demonstrator in Chemistry at the Victoria University of Manchester from 1898 till 1901, and was head of the Chemical Department of the Agricultural College at Wye in Kent, from 1901 till 1907. From 1907 till 1912 he was the Goldsmith Company's soil chemist at the Rothamsted Experimental Station. He has also filled the position of technical adviser to the Food Production Dept., and been a member of the Munitions Panel and of the National Salvage Council. He is the author of many scientific publications, including "The Fertility of the Soil" and "Lessons on Soil."

The University authorities welcome Sir John Russell's visit more particularly on account of the work now being carried on by the Waite Agricultural Research Institute. He hopes between his lectures to have an opportunity of inspecting the agricultural areas of the State, and is desirous of making himself acquainted with our agricultural problems. He expects to reach Fremantle on May 22, and will arrive in Adelaide on Friday, June 1. According to present arrangements he will leave Adelaide on June 10, proceeding thence to Melbourne, Hobart, Canberra, the irrigation areas, Sydney, and Brisbane. He will take his departure from Sydney on July 27 for New Zealand. Previous lecturers have been Sir Ernest Rutherford and Professor Mackail.

VISIT OF SIR JOHN RUSSELL.

Each year the universities of Australia invite a distinguished lecturer to visit Australia and deliver lectures on his special subjects in the State capitals. Sir Ernest Rutherford and Professor Denis Mackail have already visited Australia, and this year the choice has fallen on Sir John Russell, director of the British Agricultural Experimental Station at Rothamsted. As the largest institution of its kind in the British Empire, the work of the station plays a great part in agricultural development, and it is understood that Sir John is anxious to study at close quarters some of the agricultural and pastoral problems of Australia. He will arrive at Perth by the Cathay on May 22, and after lecturing there will come to Adelaide. He will deliver lectures in Adelaide on June 2 and 3. His subjects will be "Science and Modern Farming" and "The Rothamsted Experiment Station: How it began and what it has done." He will lecture in all the other capital cities and visit Canberra and the irrigation areas, leaving Sydney on July 27 for New Zealand. The existence of the Waite Institute for Agricultural Research in this State makes his visit of particular interest to South Australia. Sir John is 56 years old, and was educated at the University College of Wales and the Manchester University. In addition to a number of academic positions in connection with soil chemistry, he held the office of technical adviser to the Food Products Department in 1917, and has acted in an advisory capacity on the subject of food production to the Government in several departments. He is the author of a number of books on soil problems and animal nutrition.

Professor A. K. Macbeth, professor of chemistry at the Adelaide University, has been appointed a member of the advisory committee under the provisions of the Food and Drugs Act in place of Professor Brailsford Robertson, who has resigned.

CONSERVATORIUM SINGERS.

Mr. Denton the New Teacher.

The University Council, at its last meeting, appointed Mr. Harold S. Denton teacher of singing at the Elder Conservatorium, in succession to Mr. Clive Carey. During his recent visit to England, Professor Davies was entrusted with the responsibility of making a selection for that important post, and out of several applicants Mr. Denton has been chosen. He will not reach South Australia until September, but in the meantime satisfactory arrangements will be made for the care of Mr. Carey's students, in the Conservatorium.



MR. HAROLD S. DENTON.

Mr. Denton is a teacher and singer of great promise. His light baritone voice has much charm, and his vocal technique, in Dr. Davies's judgment, is of a high order. Trained wholly in the de Reszke School, he will carry on the methods of his predecessor. Mr. Carey warmly supported Mr. Denton's candidature for the position.

The new teacher has had extensive experience of operatic work, as a singer and a producer. His repertoire embraces Purcell's "Dido and Aeneas," Mozart's "Così fan tutte," Wagner's "Parsifal," Debussy's "Pelleas and Melisande," and Vaughan Williams's "Shepherds of the Delectable Mountains." Mr. Denton is also an actor, with talent for comedy. His advent will, therefore, be a welcome addition, not only to the ranks of teachers of singing, but possibly to the Repertory Theatre.

MAIL 21-4-28
Successor to Mr. Clive Carey

One of the chief missions of Dr. Davies while in Britain was to choose a successor to Mr. Clive Carey, as a teacher of singing at the Conservatorium. The announcement of the appointment of Mr. H. Denton, a graduate of the Royal College of Music, London, has now been made, although his services will not be available until the last term of the year.

Mr. Denton has studied in the Johnstone-Douglas School, which is founded upon the de Reszke method, and will they are quite content that it should be production, which both Mr. Carey and Mr. Johnstone-Douglas learned from Jean de Reszke himself.

To bridge the time which must elapse before the arrival of Mr. Denton, it is expected that Miss Olive Basnett, L.R.A.M., will be asked to fill the vacancy. Miss Basnett is a graduate of the Royal Academy of Music, London, having studied under Madame Larkcom for a number of years.

De Reszke Method

On arrival of Mr. Carey in Adelaide, she studied the de Reszke method with him, and so highly did he think of her gifts as a teacher, that many students on his waiting list were asked to go to her in the meantime. Since his departure a number of his students has continued study with her, to avoid break of method.

Miss Basnett has a beautiful mezzo-contralto voice of uncommon range and timbre, and has been frequently heard on the platform. At a concert given by the South Australian Orchestra and Adelaide Glee Club last year, she sang Brahms' beautiful "Rhapsodie" Op. 53, for contralto solo, chorus and orchestra, which earned for her high praise. She has also appeared with the Bach Society in the contralto roles of "The Messiah," and on many other occasions.

The beautiful "Solemn Melody," by Sir Walford Davies for 'cello, organ, and orchestra, which has been heard in the programme of the South Australian Orchestra, has now been recorded, and should be a welcome addition to the gramophone library.

MODERN MIRACLE.

BROADCASTING IN ENGLAND.

Fine Work of B.B.C.

By PROF. E. HAROLD DAVIES.

During my recent visit to England, I was brought into close contact with the work of the British Broadcasting Corporation—familiarly known as B.B.C. It was my good fortune many times to visit Savoy Hill, the nerve-centre from which all its marvellous energies irradiate. I was brought into personal contact with the Director-General (Sir John Reith), a man of outstanding executive ability and high ideals. We met often, and by his courtesy I was shown all over the great building, which seethes with ceaseless enterprise and activity, from early morning to late night, year in and year out.

A Modern Miracle.

And the chief wonder of it is that this greatest of scientific discoveries has leapt from its tentative beginnings into a world power, all in the space of a few years. It was only in December, 1901, that Marconi transmitted his first Morse signals from Cornwall to Newfoundland. In 1914, the thermionic valve, which made wireless telephony possible, was invented; and although in 1915 the transmission of speech and music began in America, the intervention of the war delayed progress in England until 1920, when Chelmsford Station commenced broadcasting short daily programmes of music and news. So recently as December, 1922, the British Broadcasting Company was formed, under licence from the Postmaster-General, and after four years of ever-widening scope of operation—which included the inception and rapid extension of educational broadcasting—the present corporation, constituted under royal charter, took over its whole plant and staff, and assumed entire control of wireless transmission in the United Kingdom. The shareholders of the original company were paid out at par, and, without any break in continuity or change of policy, English broadcasting became a national service, running on non-commercial lines.

So, in less than five years, an experimental toy has developed into a force of inconceivable magnitude and influence. To-day there are approximately 2½ million receiving sets in England, which, at a reasonable estimate, would give 20 millions of listeners. In other words, about half the population of the country are in constant touch with a central source of information, education, and recreation, whose policy is governed wholly by ideals of public benefit—the greatest good to the greatest number—and whose conduct is utterly free from mercenary motives.

The Significance of It.

It is not easy to realize even the present power of wireless, much less its future potentialities, with an ever-extending radius of transmission, an ever-growing experience of the technique of broadcasting, and a constantly increasing range of subject matter. The unique feature of B.B.C. lies in the fact of its being an absolute monopoly, but of beneficent intent. The people of England may only hear over the ether what is judged to be for their advantage; and, more than this, they are quite content that it should be so. Thus the monopoly is also an autocratic one, and with the best possible results. The situation is impressive, almost incredible.

Let us think of an analogy. If, in the last five years the art of printing had been invented, and had sprung into full activity as a medium for the circulation of ideas, what a measureless gain it would be if we could at once ensure that only matter of definite value to the human race were printed! I know well that there is a ready revolt against any kind of censorship; that people are always suspicious of being, as they say, "kept in ignorance," but it is difficult to believe that the floods of pernicious literature which are to-day poisoning the minds of young and old alike, had not far better be withheld from circulation. It may be true, for example, that the human body can develop a certain immunity from toxic matter; but only fools would advocate that sewage, therefore, should be allowed to run through our supplies of drinking water.

The autocratic power of B.B.C. is merely that of a mental Board of Health, and, since its policies are finally subject to Parliamentary control, there can be little fear, either of an abuse of privilege or dereliction of duty.

Two Illustrations.

Two illustrations may be of interest. Quite early in the history of the old company it was decided to broadcast religious services. Complaints were received from several quarters that religion was a controversial subject, and as such should be banned. The company, conceiving Eng-

adhered to its decision, and to-day the daily short service is one of the most appreciated features of B.B.C. programmes. In the vast, invisible auditorium of listeners there are an infinite diversity of human needs craving satisfaction; and the lively imagination will discern them. One of the most popular of wireless lecturers told me that he never spoke into the microphone without visualizing at least four different types of listener—the happy, irresponsible, wondering child; the eager, striving youth, setting out on life's adventure, and thirsting for knowledge; the old, withered cynic, sitting in his arm chair, disillusioned and dubious; and, lastly, the sick and, it may be, the dying, on their beds of pain, looking for comfort and surcease from suffering. His favourite phrase is "talking into the ages," and, of a truth, this is the only inspiration to the right use of such a potency. We have harnessed to ourselves an ethereal instrument, and even now human voices and human thoughts are winging their way into the uttermost depths of time and space.

In the light of such a conception, a second illustration of the arbitrary decision of B.B.C. is not difficult, either of understanding or justification—namely, its absolute refusal to publish "betting prices." Heaven be praised for the practical idealism, and sound sense of values, which dictates this rule!

An Alternative to Monopoly.

None the less, there are those who object to such an autocracy, and urge, as a better plan, competitive private broadcasting. Without reference to present conditions in Australia, it may be said that all arguments in favour of such a system in Great Britain have died for lack of public support; and the existing ideal of public service, free from commercial exploitation, has become so firmly established and generally approved that nothing is likely to dislodge it. The advocates of the alternative naturally point out that the fundamental advantages of "healthy competition," claiming that it must result in improved programmes, better transmission, and possibly cheaper rates. It is quite safe to say that rivalry is a general stimulus to effort, especially in the world of commerce. But here its operation would more surely lead to a "bid for popularity," and the process of capturing the public would mean an inevitable lowering of the standard of appeal. The cinema is an eloquent example. No thoughtful man would fail to realize the unrivalled agency of moving pictures as a means of education. There is nothing of history, geography, or natural science that could not be taught more vividly in this way than in any other. We all know that children love pictures. They flock to them daily in millions. But what do they see? What sort of instruction or influence are they now deriving from this most potent of teachers? One dare hardly face the answer—it is too humiliating to our judgment as an intelligent people. Competitive commercialism has cast its blight on what could easily be a source not only of wondrous enlightenment, but also of perfect joy and recreation. And competitive broadcasting must surely lead to the same end. Its promoters, intent on securing dividends, will frame their programmes to the prevailing level of public taste, or they may seek revenue by advertisements, "selling time," as it is called in America.

B.B.C. and Education.

There is also no shadow of doubt that "competitive broadcasting" spells the end of its educational use, at least in any systematic or organized way. Admitted that, as a salve to the public conscience, we hear of an occasional film being designed and shown to educational ends. So, in wireless, an odd lecture or travel talk might be found suitable for school purposes. But, in England, B.B.C. is working in close harmony with educational authorities for the full and constant use of "radio" in the school curriculum. Even last summer as many as 6,000 schools were listening to its transmissions, and the number is fast increasing. The subjects dealt with are various branches of music, English, history, geography, French (phonetic practice, reading, and conversation), and science, including Nature study. The lecturers engaged include such eminent men as Sir Oliver Lodge, Sir Walford Davies, Professor Elliott Smith, and many others, too numerous to be mentioned. Further, the scope of the lectures is designed to cover the needs of both elementary and adult education. The possible extent of B.B.C.'s influence in Great Britain can hardly be estimated, but the mere fact that the pupils of the remotest schools in the country are now