

Cost of B.M.A. Meeting in Melbourne May Be £200,000

MELBOURNE, Thursday. WITHOUT calculating the financial loss entailed by absence from their practices, the cost of the British Medical Association's meeting to visiting members and their hosts may be estimated conservatively at £200,000.

Further appreciation of the high honor paid to Melbourne by the council of the association in choosing the centenary city as the venue of this year's meeting is provoked by an analysis of the big finance behind the organization.

Approximately 500 visitors are represented by the overseas contingent, including the families of the delegates, and the average expense entailed by these may be placed at £300 each.

In addition, some hundreds of members have come from all parts of Aus-

tralia and in their case when not guests at private homes they will have to pay their own hotel expenses. The total expenditure would be little less than £200,000.

More than 60 Melbourne homes have more than 20 doctors entertaining delegates lavishly, but in an estimate of the cost of the B.M.A. meetings the cost of that hospitality cannot be overlooked.

The local organization has incurred a big expense in providing official motor cars for the use of presidents and committees of sections, and high hallmarks, and in providing official accommodation and other incidentals.

remuneration of plagues as one of the scourges of humanity; war, though it has gained immeasurably in terror during the course of our living, that science has been robbed of much of its agony by the patience and skill of another; for disease no longer haunts the battlefield, and some of the ghastliest wounds yield to the skill of the master surgeon. In the realm of peace, science has given us, in giving us, more desirable living conditions, sanitation, pure foods, insulation from the rigors of climate, and protection to our nerves from the torments of noise. The result of all this is seen in the fact that man's average expectation of life is now about 60 years, compared with less than 40 years a century ago. In Sir Isaac Isaac's words, medical and surgical science have reached a turning point in their history. Not only have they entered into a more intimate partnership with each other, but they are constantly expanding in scope, and drawing other branches of knowledge. The chemist, the physicist, and the engineer are at the call of the doctor, who more than ever retains his high position in the esteem of the community. Membership of the B.M.A. implies exacting standards of conduct, a lofty ethical code, and ideals which will stand the test of disappointment as well as the temptations of material success. The respect which the average person has for his medical adviser, as a counsellor as well as a healer, is proof enough that doctors, as a whole, live up to the ideals of their order.

In proportion as medical science bestows its favors upon us, so do we demand more and more of it. The novel point has been raised, whether the modern man's desire to be relieved of pain at all costs may not have its disadvantages. Anaesthesia, local and general, softens the pain of even the most trifling surgical operation. The slightest headache drives us to a palliative. Pain, which is frequently the only warning sign of a grave danger, we hasten to dispel with narcotics. The subject has been referred to by Dr. J. S. Fairbairn, president of the British College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, with the provocative suggestion that the high rate of maternal mortality may be a concomitant of modern civilisation. From childhood, he says, people are taught not to suffer pain. "The mother, too, therefore makes demands for relief from the doctor, and she places him in very difficult positions, if not to blame her. But for all those means of overcoming destiny there is a cost. In the United States, where parturition at birth has most completely replaced Nature, the maternal mortality is the highest of the civilised countries. In view of the matter, says Dr. Fairbairn, who is one of the delegates at the Melbourne meeting, is to get back to Nature. For the fact seems to be—and it has been remarked before—that, among mothers who rely wholly upon the midwife's aid, there is a lower percentage of maternal mortality than among those who demand the highest medical skill. This happens, not because the doctor is not able to place far more skill at the disposal of the mother than the midwife, but in spite of this very fact, since, when he is available, the inclination is to make greater demands upon him. Pain may be removed at the expense of lowering functional activity. This may seem to be rather a cruel anomaly; but medical science accepts it as a further chal-

leng. It merely adds a further complication to a problem which is causing general concern among the highly civilised races of the world. The situation is one in which the medical profession is entitled to expect the community itself to support the campaign for dissemination of knowledge upon this vital subject. At this moment South Australians are following with interest of papers upon this and other aspects of the practice of medicine which are being read at the B.M.A. meeting in Melbourne, and are looking forward with pleasurable anticipation to the call which a number of the distinguished visitors will make upon this city when the Adelaide Medical School jubilee celebrations are continued later in the month.

The annual dinner of the British Medical Association will probably be the largest ever to have been held in Victoria in one session. Covers are being laid for 800, and more than 100 waitresses will serve, while there will be 36 wine waiters.

Mr. J. O. G. Gastonbury, of the Educator Department, was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of South Australia last night. Mr. Gastonbury is a graduate of the University of Adelaide, having gained his B.Sc. in 1923, and his B.A. in 1922.

Doctors Say B.M.A. Big Success

MELBOURNE, Friday.—All business done, except for one address tomorrow, members of the British Medical Association began reluctantly today to think about departure.

The majority of the British members will leave for the New Zealand and the Marella on Sunday for the East Indies and the Malay Peninsula, later joining a P. & O. vessel and returning to London by way of Suez, thus completing a world tour which began with their journey through Canada and the United States.

Mr. W. McAdam Eccles, the surgeon who has been attending the meetings for 40 years, said today that he had been associated with committees of management for 25 years, and at none of these functions that he had attended with so much success in the past. The chairman of the council of the association (Dr. E. Kaye le Fleming) said today:

"Work was of a high standard, and attendances were extremely good. The meeting, I hope, will have far-reaching results in linking the profession in the homeland and in Australia more closely together, and in overcoming those difficulties of distance. The experiment of holding the meeting in Australia was a complete success from every point of view," said the permanent medical secretary (Dr. G. C. Anderson).

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OUR DOCTORS

The gathering of doctors, in Melbourne for the adjourned annual meeting of the British Medical Association must claim a large share of our interest, and not merely because no such conference has ever before been held in this country. The event, since it marks the close of the Victorian Centenary celebrations, must seem to encourage a mental review of the greatest period in the history of medical science; and the more so for the reason that the British Medical Association itself is only just over one hundred years old. This momentous century has seen veritable miracles wrought in the treatment of disease and the preservation of human life. A visit to the recent exhibition held in connection with the Jubilee of the Medical School of the Adelaide University, might well have induced the thought that it has been the past fifty years which has produced the most amazing advances; and, that this is substantially true, there is no denying. The modern era of medicine, however, had its real beginnings during the early part of the nineteenth century; although since then, discovery has followed upon discovery with almost bewildering rapidity. Lister gave the world antiseptic surgery, and, according to an authority quoted by the editor of *Pasture's* this week, has saved more human lives than those destroyed in all the wars of history. Louis Pasteur, working in an allied field, discovered that micro-organisms of disease might be isolated and then attacked with serum injected into the blood of the subjects. This was one of Pasteur's contributions to pathology and his name has become a household word in every language. The Curies, husband and wife, both brilliant physicists, started science when they discovered radium, which was ultimately to give fresh hope to the world's cancer sufferers. Rontgen's X-rays have revolutionised diagnosis as well as therapy. These are only some of the more outstanding achievements known to all of us. But medical science, whether or not revolutionary discoveries are being made at the moment, goes on its way in a continuous line of progress, winning fresh victories day after day in the conquest of disease. Recent scientists were made eleven degrees on Wednesday for contributions to the cause of healing, any one of which would be sufficient to justify an illuminated address from humanity in general.

But science seeks popular recognition in a mark of the nobility of true research; that the results are the workers' gifts—and efforts, largely anonymous gifts—to mankind. The new century has seen the virtual

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OUTCOME OF B.M.A. VISIT

Medical Research Council Soon

CABINET'S PLAN

MELBOURNE, Friday. **Immediate action** will be taken by the Federal Government to establish a Federal medical research council, with the co-operation of State Governments as the first step towards the creation of a permanent memorial of the British Medical Association visit, the Deputy Prime Minister (Dr. Page) announced today.

Dr. Page said that the Federal Council of the B.M.A. had recommended the co-ordination of Federal and State medical research activities on similar lines to the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, which had done excellent work for primary industries.

Not only would a Federal body of this sort eliminate overlapping and duplication, but it would provide an organization which undoubtedly would attract substantial endowments. An endowment fund of this character would permit research into the cause and treatment of this pharosic disease.

Dr. Earle Page

the widest possible national lines. Moreover, it would prevent the sporadic and chaotic conditions which usually followed the dependent research on annual Government Budgets. Asked whether the Commonwealth Government would start a fund with a substantial contribution, Dr. Page said that this was a matter for consideration by Cabinet.

QUALITY IS ESSENTIAL

Doctor on Our Population PACIFIC DANGER

MELBOURNE, Friday. **IN** his address on "Racial Freedom in Australia and its Neighborhood," Sir Raphael Cilento, director of health in Queensland, indicated at the British Medical Association's meeting today how dangerous was the population balance of the Pacific.

He also indicated how specialised to a city environment Australia's population was becoming, and how these checks on population that economic stress was introducing in Europe might save Western civilisation from disaster but might bring Australia to ruin.

"Our only possible safeguard here," Sir Raphael declared, "must be quality—a population of real health, both physical and mental."

To provoke discussion Sir Raphael suggested three propositions. These were:

Every civilisation has its rise, its staminate, or disillusion, and its fall. Populations tend always to increase to the limits of subsistence, unless checked by disease, economic misery, or deliberate limitation, and.

That every specialisation to a particular environment, such as a peculiar environment of advancement becomes, at last, a weakness—fatal if the environment suddenly changes.

Oswald Spengler, Sir Raphael said, claimed that there was no middle course, once a falling culture had produced its hypernationalised dictatorships. The end was world domination by one or the other confounding nation.

Speaking of the Pacific population, Sir Raphael pointed out that it was declining in places where native institutions flourished with all their virtues, while in places where white men had entirely destroyed their social organisation.