

## HIGHER EDUCATION.

## SITTING OF ROYAL COMMISSION.

## EVIDENCE OF SIR SAMUEL WAY.

The Royal Commission on higher education sat at Parliament House on Friday. Present—Mr. T. Ryan (chairman), Hon. F. W. Coneybeer, Hon. J. Cowan, Hon. A. W. Styles, and Mr. F. W. Young.

## BEGINNING OF UNIVERSITY.

Sir Samuel Way, Chancellor of the University, said he had been connected with the University since its birth, and had been Chancellor since 1883. The University had its foundation in a gift of £20,000 from Sir W. Hughes in 1874, and he said they had always endeavored to make a modern institution. When it started they wanted to grant degrees in science, and that included the practical application of the science of anything. He did not think that in those days the engineering degree existed. The constitution of the government of the Adelaide University was more democratic than that of any of the other universities in Australia. He did not exclude Queensland and Western Australia, and if any of the University men said that the Government here was ultra-conservative, they must have been speaking without a sufficient knowledge of the facts. In 1878 Mr. Angus gave them £4000 for an engineering scholarship, the object of which was to enable men who were graduating here to go to Europe and America to complete their education in advanced science. He thought it of great value to have representatives from the Chambers of Commerce and Manufactures or any other body of that kind.

Mr. Cowan—Doesn't it mean, your Honor, that the council is really more representative than democratic?

His Honor—You are quite right.

## ESTABLISHMENT OF PROFESSORSHIPS.

Continuing, the witness said that at the foundation of the University there were four professorships established. Sir Thomas Elder gave a donation of £10,000 towards the foundation of a school of medicine, and in 1883 they established a chair of anatomy and a lectureship of physiology. In 1888 they completed their arrangements for a full medical course. In 1884 the Hon. J. H. Angus gave £6000 towards the endowment of a chair of chemistry and the following year the Angus professor of chemistry was appointed. They really owed the foundation of the medical school to Professors Stirling and Watson.

The Chairman—Yes, we all admit that we owe a deep debt of gratitude to those professors.

The witness went on to explain how the school had been founded.

The Chairman—Young fellows from the University have said to me "The University has done a great deal for us. Professor Stirling is a father to everyone, but we could do so much more if the Adelaide Hospital would work in with the University. It would give us a better chance." That might be.

The Witness—That is a question we might deal with later on. Continuing, Sir Samuel Way said that in 1884 a chair of music was established and a musical professor was appointed. In 1890 a professorship of law was established in place of a lectureship of law, which had been in existence since 1883. In 1883 a law school was established and there was no branch of learning which had given such beneficial effect to the profession. The University turned out as good men as there were in Australia. He was quite sure that there was not a man in the ranks of the legal profession who wouldn't say that he would be a better man had he had a university training. The suggestion that the university training should be extended to a larger section of the people would mean that they would all gain by it. There was not a man who would not be the better for the training.

## LOSING THE PROFESSORS.

The Chairman—South Australia, we are told, lost Professor Salmon because of the limited time which he had for research work.

The Witness—There were two reasons. First, he was offered a higher salary in New Zealand; and, second, there were two professors there, and he wanted to do original work.

The Chairman—Does Professor Brown get more time than Professor Salmon did?

The Witness—I cannot answer that. I think he teaches fewer subjects.

Mr. Young—He has four assistants now.

The Chairman—But he may teach four times as many students.

The Witness—He has never complained to me of being overworked. Sir Samuel Way went on to say that the professorship of history was founded in 1902, and to explain why Professor Bragg retired in 1908.

The Chairman—It has been shown that at least two desirable men have been lost to the University, and that probably they would have remained here had the Government gone to the assistance of the University.

The Witness said that it must be borne in mind that prominent men could not be attracted to a part of the world where their scope was restricted.

The Chairman—Do I understand that one of the reasons for you saying that is that you consider that the Government should see that more time was given for research work?

The Witness said that when Dr. Mawson was carrying out important work they could not help him. During the

proposed expedition of Dr. Mawson the University could not give any financial assistance because every sixpence of their funds was earmarked.

## THE MAWSON EXPEDITION.

The Chairman—May I take it as coming from your Honor that if this commission went out of its way and proposed to the Government to allow a few thousand pounds as a special subsidy to assist the expedition of Dr. Mawson, you would think we were doing the proper thing?

The Witness—I think you would be covering yourselves with glory if you succeeded in doing what you say. If money were granted to the University for research work any man who had views on higher education would approve of it.

The Chairman—I think the money for Dr. Mawson's expedition could be collected within six weeks.

## TEACHING ENGINEERING.

Continuing, Sir Samuel Way said that in 1908 the chair of mathematics and physics was divided. That was after Professor Bragg left. Physics was then taken by Professor Grant, and mathematics and applied science were given to Professor Chapman.

The Chairman—Is Professor Chapman in charge of engineering, then?

The Witness—Yes.

The Chairman—We have thought that engineering was carried on at the University, and we have received a very great shock to learn that the need existed for a sum to be granted by Parliament for the establishment of a chair of engineering.

## AMENDING THE ACT.

The Chairman—Has the experience of the University, Sir Samuel, for the past 37 years shown that an amendment of the original Act is desirable?

The Witness—We should have to amend the Act if the commission should recommend more representation on the council, and undoubtedly we want an amendment of the Act by authorising a bachelorship of engineering. We are teaching engineering, but we cannot give a special degree in engineering. We can only give a degree in science with a diploma in engineering.

Mr. Coneybeer—Does not the School of Mines do similar work?

The Witness—Yes.

The Chairman—Do you find that the members of the Senate take an active interest in the government of the institution?

## TRADES AND LABOR COUNCIL.

The Witness—Yes. Continuing, Sir Samuel Way said he would be in favor of anyone interested in technical education being represented on the elective body. He did not know the constitution of the Trades and Labor Council, but he thought it was a body that had in view the protection of those engaged in trades and the advancement of their interests.

The Chairman—It is purely industrial and not political.

The Witness said that if the Trades and Labor Council was a political body he would vote against its being represented. If it was an industrial body interested in technical education he could see no reason why it should not be represented.

Mr. Coneybeer—It is industrial pure and simple.

## THE COUNCIL AND SALARIES.

The witness stated that he did not for a moment consider that the University was perfect. It was human. Years ago it was looked upon as being beyond the requirements of the community.

The Chairman—That was an unfortunate feeling. It was also unfortunate that the feeling lasted for such a long while.

The witness did not see any objection to a slight increase in the council, but he cautiously warned the board against making the council into a large body. In dealing with the advisability of increasing the present salaries paid at the University, he traced the salaries paid since the University began. They had passed through a period of bad seasons, and were obliged to economise. The present salaries were miserable ones. They were not on the small scale of £600 a year because of the ability of the professors. Two of them had secured fellowships of the Royal Society, and two had been taken to the other side of the world to occupy distinguished academic positions there. The University of Melbourne gave twice the amount that Adelaide was paying.

The Chairman—Don't you think it is sweating to pay £600 a year when other universities are advertising for junior men at £900?—No, it was not sweating, because if we had the money we would pay it.

What was Dr. Mawson receiving?—He got £400 a year.

Now do you not think that a man like Dr. Mawson is worth more?—Yes; but I will tell you why we gave him that. We were obliged to divide the chair amongst two men, letting each of them have £400 a year. As far as salaries are concerned I defy anybody to say we sweated.

Is it not true that Dr. Mawson had an offer to go to another university?—I cannot say. I did hear that £1420 was offered him and it was also said that if he made application for the position he would get it.

## GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATION.

The witness put in a letter which stated that the council members were unanimously of the opinion that there should be direct Government representation on the council. It was suggested that the representatives should be the Minister of Education, the Treasurer, and the Director of Education. Regarding the raising of salaries, it was desired to raise them so as to make a deduction for the purpose of making a retiring allowance. The representatives of the Government would have a voice in that matter. They would sit on the council as members of such. It was their desire to put the Adelaide University abreast of the best universities in the world. If they had the money and saw the need for another chair, such as that of comparative literature, they would have no hesitation in spending it. Although the University had asked for a minimum of £2500, if the amount was increased to £3500 the usefulness of the institution would be very materially increased.

## TEACHING OF ENGINEERING.

In answer to further questions from the chairman the witness said that the teaching of engineering had never been neglected by the University. Professor Chapman was at the head of the school, which included mathematics. He had been a lecturer on engineering, and had especially qualified himself for the position. The subjects of engineering and mathematics were subjects that should have the attention of two professors.

The Chairman—We are quite safe in saying, then, that, although you have not had a chair of engineering, the work has not been neglected, but has been carried on for many years?