

NEEDS OF THE UNIVERSITY**WANTED—MORE MEN AND MORE MONEY****INCREASE OF GOVERNMENT GRANT ASKED FOR****PREMIER REPLIES SYMPATHETICALLY TO INFLUENTIAL DEPUTATION.**

According to the story told by the deputation from the council and staff of the Adelaide University which waited on the Premier yesterday higher education in this State is in serious danger of falling far behind the standard of the universities in the other States of the Commonwealth. For nearly an hour Mr. Peake listened to the recital of the needs of the different branches of higher education as outlined by the professorial heads, and was so impressed that he made a sympathetic response, and promised amid hear, hears that the Government would do all in its power to meet the demands of the ever-growing institution. The council of the university prepared a statement of the present position financially and otherwise of the university, the subject matter of which is covered in the following:—

What is Wanted.

"In December, 1910, the council prepared a statement of the needs of the university for the information of the select committee of the House of Assembly on the university and higher education, afterwards formed into the Royal Commission on Education. It is now over three years since that statement was drawn up, and some of the wants have been met by the increased annual grant since provided by the Government, after an interim report of the commission. It seems desirable, therefore, to prepare an amended statement of the present needs of the university for submission to the Government, which is now taking action on the final report of the commission.

"With the help already received, the council has been able to increase the salaries of the staff, to appoint a professor of botany, to build and equip a botanical laboratory, and to make considerable additions to the university buildings for the accommodation of the growing library. There still remain, however, a number of very pressing needs which must be met if the university is to maintain its efficiency under the increasing demands upon it, and even since the date of the last statement the increase in the number of students has, in some departments, outrun the laboratory accommodation that was at that time sufficient. In the final report of the Royal Commission it is stated:—'We feel bound to say that South Australia has every reason to be proud of the excellent work which the university has accomplished. It has, however, practically reached the limit of its usefulness under present conditions, and if further progress is to be made, and we are to keep pace with the other States, increased financial assistance must be given.' And again:—'The university, to all intents and purposes, is a national institution, and there is, we consider, an obligation on the Government to assist to extend its scope of usefulness, subject to ministerial approval of what is proposed to be done.' Accordingly the council submits the following amended statement of the immediate needs of the university in the hope that the Government will substantially support the efforts of the council and the professors to promote the usefulness and value of the institution. The needs are grouped under the following heads:—(1) Additions to the staff; (2) new buildings; (3) complete equipment of laboratories; (4) additional annual grant for equipment.

Addition to the Staff.

"(1) Faculty of Arts.—The faculty has three needs, viz.:—(a) Three lecturers at £400 a year each, to assist the three present professors; (b) a professor of French and German at £800; (c) a professor of economics, who might also be available to assist the Workers' Educational Association, at £800. The annual cost of these three requirements will amount to £2800.

"(2) Faculty of Science.—Additional laboratory assistance is required in biology, physiology, physics, chemistry, botany, geology, mineralogy, and engineering, estimated at £1000 a year. It is also very desirable that the present professorship of mathematics and mechanics should be divided into two, and a new professor of pure mathematics appointed at £800. The subject of astronomy could then be attached to that of mathematics. With the large classes in mathematics a tutor also is needed at £250 a year. The limitation of the teaching staff at present is conspicuously shown by the fact that we have one professor assisted by one lecturer to cover the whole field of mathematics and engineering (excluding electrical engineering). Some of the engineering teaching is done at the School of Mines; but even so it is quite impossible that two men can deal with the subjects embraced in the university courses with the thoroughness that is desirable.

"(3) Faculty of Law.—For extended teaching in the law school, £150.

"(4) Faculty of Medicine.—The essential needs are a professor of pathology at £800 a year, and a lecturer on physical and bio-chemistry at £500 a year. The council is reluctantly compelled to admit that our medical students are no longer as well equipped for their life work as in Melbourne and Sydney. In medicine, perhaps, more than in any other subject, there has been an immense advance in knowledge, and the present staff, laboratories, and lecture rooms, are quite insufficient to cover all the branches of study.

New Buildings.

"The following additional buildings are required:—(a) For geology and mineralogy, £5000; (b) for physiology, biology, and bio-chemistry, inclusive of a small medical lecture theatre, £8000; (c) lecture hall to hold 600 persons, £3000; (d) caretaker's lodge, say, £1000; (e) students' rooms, one for each sex, say, £200; (f) additions to workshops, £400; total, £19,400. As an illustration of the need for more laboratory space, it may be pointed out that this year there are 42 students taking practical physiology with working room for 22 only. In consequence the professor of physiology has to duplicate each demonstration, and to prepare for two laboratory classes on the same subject on the same days. Moreover, one and the same laboratory has to serve for the practical classes in physiology, biology, and physiological chemistry, which causes considerable inconvenience to the work in each subject.

Equipment of Laboratories.

"The following are required:—(a) More adequate equipment of existing laboratories, at say £1500; (b) the equipment for pathology and the present pathological museum, at say £2500. (This amount depends upon what arrangements may be made for the teaching of pathology at the Adelaide Hospital. The whole sum of £2500 may not be required.) (c) The equipment of laboratories for bio-chemistry, physiology, and biology, £1000; total, £5000.

Additional Annual Grant for Equipment.

"An additional equipment grant of £1000 a year is required, viz., £400 for the library, £400 for the laboratories, and £200 for contingent expenses consequent on the establishment of new departments.

"The above statement represents the immediate requirements of the university, but when a School of Agriculture, the inception of which will be made possible by the generous gift of Mr. Peter Waite, is established, as well as Schools of Dentistry and Veterinary Science, adequate staffs will be required. In the event of the Government taking action in accordance with the report of the commission to establish free examinations for leaving certificates, it would be desirable for the university to give up, or considerably modify, its present system of public examinations and assist in the general scheme, though the net

income of the university now benefits by the examination fees to the extent of about £1000 a year.

Summary.

"The total cost under the above six heads may be summarised as follows:—(a) New annual expenditure, viz.:—additions to staff, £6300; new annual equipment, £1000; total, £7300; (b) new buildings and equipment of laboratories, see sections II. and III., £24,400.

"The council would respectfully call the attention of the Government to the final report of the commission in which the incomes of the four Australian universities for 1912 are stated as follows:—Sydney, Government grant, £43,956; total receipts, £87,273; Melbourne, £37,403; £76,729; Adelaide, £11,203, £26,799; Brisbane, £12,600, £17,319. xIncluding building grant of £10,200.

"The recently established University of Brisbane, with no school of either medicine or law, and with but 176 students, is thus in receipt of a larger Government grant than the University of Adelaide, with over 700 students, exclusive of those in the School of Music and with schools to maintain in arts, science, medicine, law, engineering, music, and commerce. The needs of a university are, however, determined not so much by the number of its students as by the standard of its degrees and by the courses of instruction which it should offer. The number of students at this university is relatively large compared with the population of the State, but the buildings, laboratories, and the numerical strength of the staff are not adequate to the work that is now undertaken, and still less to the work that is waiting.

"In the light of the foregoing figures, the council respectfully asks that the annual endowment of the university be increased from £11,200 (at which it stands at present) to £20,000."

Danger of Stagnation.

Mr. W. J. Denny, M.P., introduced the deputation, which consisted of members of the University Council and professors. In elaborating upon the above statement Professor Stirling stated that the work of the University was not expanding as it should do if it was desired to keep abreast of the Sydney and Melbourne Universities, nor was it possible to maintain the efficiency of the existing schools. They recognised there was a risk, under the present condition of affairs, of the University becoming stag-