

SCIENCE CONGRESS.

Plans for Adelaide.

Active preparations are being made for the great meetings of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, which will be held in Australia in August. Many of the world's most brilliant scientists will make the trip to the Commonwealth from England, Europe, and America. Applications for inclusion in the party numbered 450, too many for the association to properly deal with, and a reduction of would-be tourists had to be made. The total at present stands at 370, but this number will also be reduced if possible. There will be about 40 representatives of European and American countries. The Organizing Secretary for the meetings (Dr. A. C. D. Rivett) is now in Adelaide. He has just returned from England, where he consulted with officers of the British Association regarding details of the tour. Discussing the forthcoming meetings with a reporter on Friday, Dr. Rivett gave interesting facts, which are calculated to convey a good idea of its importance, both in the interests of science and by reason of the advertisement of Australia that will be involved.

—Meetings in August.—

"It is surprising," remarked Dr. Rivett, "that so many prominent men are able to give so much time to travelling the great distance to this country. It speaks well for the growing interest in Australia and Australian affairs that so many of the most eminent men of the universities of the British Isles have expressed their desire to make the trip. It would be invidious to mention individuals. The complete list of those scientists coming will be made available to the press in a few days. One cannot but feel the greatest gratification at the high standing of our proposed visitors." Dr. Rivett added that a small party of about 70 scientists will spend a week in Western Australia from July 28 to August 4. Then they will join the main party, and all will come on to Adelaide on August 8. The new Aberdeen liner Euripides and the Orient mailboat will probably convey most of the party, as both are due to arrive on the same day. Other members of the association will come from the east via America. The visitors will remain in Adelaide until August 12.

—Valuable Addresses.—

The programme arranged for them in this city includes receptions and other social functions, but chief importance attaches to three main gatherings. The first of these occasions will embrace the delivery of an address by the retiring President (Sir Oliver Lodge), whose name needs no introduction. For a second similar assembly a lecturer has not yet been appointed. The original selection of Professor G. C. Bourne, of Oxford, has had to lapse, owing to uncertainty whether he can leave England. The third big meeting will have to do with the sectional activities of the association. For the purposes of its distinctly scientific work the association will be divided into various sections. At the first meeting at York in 1831 the association met as a single body. "The day of specialism has altered that," remarked Dr. Rivett. "The physicist is seldom comfortable now listening to a technical discourse on rust in wheat, nor is the botanist or the zoologist the most interested possible listener to a discourse on geodetic triangulation. Section A will deal with physical and mathematical science; B with chemistry; C with geology; D with zoology; E with geography; F with economics and statistics; G with engineering; H with anthropology; I with physiology; K with botany; L with educational science; and M with agriculture. Each section will have a President, who will inaugurate the work of the section with an address on the present position of his subject, particularly of that department of it in which he is particularly interested. The sections will not all meet in Adelaide, but two Presidential addresses will be given here. Careful thought has been given to the selection of the two subjects, and the decision has gone in favour of geography and agriculture."

—Compliments to South Australia.—

Dr. Rivett expressed his opinion that the two subjects mentioned represented a happy choice for two reasons. The first was that they conveyed a compliment to Sir Charles Lucas (late head of the Dominions Department of the Colonial Office), who was the first to suggest this meeting, and should therefore be heard at the first centre. The second reason was that the subjects involved a compliment to Adelaide, because of the magnificent contributions to geographical work which have been made recently by Dr. Mawson. It is regarded as unfortunate that Dr. Mawson cannot be present in Adelaide at the time. His generosity in postponing his first public statement of the scientific result of his magnificent expedition will make this association meeting a notable one, and will give its scientific work a marked Australian character. Dr. Rivett added:—"It was an Australian expedition, and one cannot fail to appreciate Dr. Mawson's generous resolve, for it entails some sacrifice to make the announcement of its results so important a feature of the distinctly Australian contributions. One wishes Dr. Mawson's contribution could be made in Adelaide. Other things being equal, of course it should be. No one questions that. But Dr. Mawson's time in England is so limited, that it would be false kindness to urge him to cut it short in order to be in this city in the second week in August. The fortnight he gains by postponing his papers until the Sydney meeting is very important for him, though a misfortune for Adelaide. Nevertheless, one may trust Sir Charles Lucas in his personal address to make very decided allusion to what, in the words spoken to me by Dr. Bruce, of the famous Scottish Antarctic Expedition, is the most valuable piece of work ever carried out in Antarctica. That the address on "Agriculture" should be given in South Australia is obviously most appropriate. It will be given by Mr. A. D. Hall, M.A., F.R.S., late Director of the Rothamsted Agricultural Station, and now a Commissioner under the Development Act. The address may be expected to arouse much interest and comment. In addition, a lecturer has been placed at the disposal of the Workers' Educational Association for one evening. The arrangements for this meeting are entirely in the hands of the organization mentioned, and its energetic Secretary (Mr. T. Ryan). Professor Gonner, M.A. (President of the economics and statistics section) will deliver the lecture."

—Terms of Membership.—

In the course of further remarks, Dr. Rivett said all the moneys which the association received in subscriptions were devoted to the promotion of scientific re-

search. He did not doubt that the association would take up some Australian problems during the visit to the Commonwealth and support work in connection with them. No money received in subscriptions was ever spent on the annual meetings, the expenses of which were always borne locally. The Organizing Secretary continued:—"Probably no better value is ever given for money than that which the British Association returns for its subscriptions in the shape of the results of scientific research upon national problems. To enable this to be done, however, a large membership is essential, and the association, while it has a fixed members' list, relies considerably upon securing a high local membership for the year during which the particular meetings take place. Usually at an English meeting the association has from 600 to 2,500 local members. For the Adelaide meetings special terms have been arranged. Full members who attend only in Adelaide may join for £1 and associates for 10s. The difference between the two is that members have certain additional privileges, of which the most important is the right to receive free of cost the large annual report, which gives a complete account of the meetings and includes reports of the scientific papers read and the addresses given. I hope there will be a large enrolment in Adelaide. Professors E. C. Stirling and Kerr Grant are in full charge of local arrangements, and will attend to enquiries. Mr. T. Gill, I.S.O., is the Honorary Treasurer. Among the Vice-Presidents are His Excellency the Governor, the Premier, the Mayor, and the Chancellor of the University. The arrangements are proceeding rapidly now. The Government is giving generous support. It is issuing a handbook containing articles by experts, which will be a fine advertisement for the State. The work of editing this book has been placed in the hands of the Hon. D. J. Gordon, M.L.C., and Mr. V. H. Ryan of the Tourist Bureau."

—Facilitating the Scientists.—

Certain railway facilities have already been generously granted by the Government to the association. The first requests of the body in this connection have had to be increased. "No one contemplated that the Australian visit would be so popular," exclaimed Dr. Rivett. "You must remember that only 150 of the visitors will receive any contribution to their overseas expenses, and that 225 are paying their own ocean travelling bills. It is greatly to be hoped that the Governments of the States will see their way to offer the hospitality of the railways to the whole party without distinction. South Africa did it in 1905 for a party of 380. Precedent is not everything, but to overlook it makes comparisons possible, which we, as Australians, do not wish to bear. However, these matters are to be considered at the forthcoming Premiers' Conference. We cannot provide private hospitality in the different capitals for all the visitors, nor is it necessary to do so, but we hope to do it for 300. A committee has been energetically at work in Adelaide for some time seeking the necessary provision. The arrangement of excursions in South Australia will be left to a subcommittee under the direction of Mr. Angus Parsons, M.P. As our visitors will come to see the country, the work of Mr. Parsons is important. Apart from excursions over comparatively short distances, trips to Port Pirie and Broken Hill will be arranged for a party of experts on mining, geology, and chemistry. These visits have been made possible through the generosity of Mr. G. D. Delprat, of the Broken Hill Mining Managers' Association."