

SOUTH AFRICAN UNIVERSITY
LEGISLATION.

PUBLIC discussion, extending over many years, in the Press and in Parliament, on higher education in South Africa has at length resulted in legislation. The old University of the Cape of Good Hope, with its offices at Capetown, was merely an "examining" institution, founded on the model of the University of London. The constituent colleges were (the figures give distances in miles from Capetown):—The South African College at Capetown, the Victoria College at Stellenbosch (31), the Huguenot Ladies' College at Wellington (45), the Rhodes University College at Grahamstown (757), the Grey University College at Bloemfontein (750), the Natal University College at Pietermaritzburg (1182), the Transvaal University College at Pretoria (1001), and the South African School of Mines and Technology at Johannesburg (956). There are many objections to a university which is a mere examining body; there are many objections to a university the constituent colleges of which are separated even by such short distances as are Liverpool, Manchester, and Leeds; it has long been felt that all such objections are greatly magnified when a meeting of Senate cannot be held unless many of its members spend six or eight days in travel. It scarcely needs the words of the report of the University Commission (p. 138) to let us know that, in spite of having distinguished, well-paid professors, the only work done by the colleges hitherto has been mere cramming for examinations, and that there is an almost total absence of the university spirit in South Africa.

In 1904 Mr. Alfred Beit gave an estate near Johannesburg to the Government of the Transvaal (this was before the union of the States under one Government) for agricultural and other educational purposes. The estate is probably worth 20,000*l.* now. In 1905 he made a will giving 200,000*l.* to the University of Johannesburg for university buildings on the estate; "but if, at the expiration of ten years after my death, the said 200,000*l.* shall not have been applied in such building and equipment as aforesaid, then this legacy shall lapse and fall into my residuary estate." Even now there is no university at Johannesburg, nor is there any college of university rank except the School of Mines. Mr. Beit died in 1906. In 1910 General Smuts, the Union Minister of Education, suggested to Mr. Otto Beit (his brother's heir) and to Sir Julius Wernher that Mr. A. Beit's bequest ought to be increased to 500,000*l.* for the establishment of a national university on the Rhodes estate at Groote Schuur (at Capetown), which belonged to the Government. Sir Julius promised 250,000*l.*, and Mr. Otto Beit 50,000*l.* The De Beers Company offered also 25,000*l.* In a joint letter Sir Julius Wernher and Mr. Otto Beit said that "the primary condition underlying the gift . . . was that the university to be erected shall and must be a residential teaching university."

There was universal approval all over South Africa of the idea of a residential teaching university at Capetown, but it soon appeared that

there was room for divergent opinion as to the nature of such a university. A proposal largely approved of and soon after almost universally condemned was that the new institution should be a "post-graduate" university. Then came a new proposal, so favourably received that it was embodied in a Parliamentary Bill, that entrance to the new university should require "intermediate" qualifications, and not merely the ordinary matriculation. To this proposal, also, opposition became too great, and the Bill was withdrawn. Before 1914 there was a general expression of opinion in favour of two universities—north and south. A University Commission met in January, 1914, and reported just before the war in favour of two universities—a southern university with new buildings on the Rhodes estate at Capetown, incorporating the South African College and the Victoria College, and a northern university incorporating all the other colleges. The committee recommended that 350,000*l.* should be spent in buildings and equipment at Capetown, that Stellenbosch should get 25,000*l.*, and that the rest of the money should be distributed among the more distant colleges.

Prof. John Perry, who was one of the commissioners, agreed to the more important recommendations of the report, only with reservations; he especially wished half a million to be given to a teaching university at Capetown so that South Africa might have at least one real university. He said that no scheme could succeed unless Stellenbosch had some endowment, and he proposed that to the 25,000*l.* there should be added a Government grant of 50,000*l.*, and also that Stellenbosch should be encouraged to gather more money so that she might soon apply for a charter of her own. In that case the Capetown University would consist of the South African College only. Prof. Perry was strongly of opinion that no distant college, such as that of Grahamstown, should be incorporated with Capetown, and in this consisted his greatest difference from his colleagues. This gentleman's recommendations have now been carried out in an Act of Parliament. The South African College is to become "The University of Capetown," with its present buildings and new ones on the Rhodes estate, and with 525,000*l.* The Victoria College is to become "The University of Stellenbosch," a recent bequest of 50,000*l.* by Dr. Marais taking the place of the proposed Government grant. (There ought certainly to be a large additional grant from the Government.) The proposed northern university is to be called "The University of South Africa." It is to be hoped that the Johannesburg School of Mines will soon apply for a charter of its own; it is already nearly as well equipped as any polytechnic in the world.

Now that the scheme has been carried out, the people of Johannesburg make objections, having awakened to the knowledge that, except for their School of Mines, they have no teaching there of a university character nearer than Pretoria, which is forty-five miles

distant. On March 28, 1914, their educational authorities said: "The scheme for founding a great residential university at Groote Schuur has our hearty and unanimous support. We are prepared to abandon any local ambitions we may have had in favour of this truly national enterprise, even though it involves our losing the revenue we at present derive from the Beit bequest." It is difficult to see why objections should now be brought to the very university which two years and a half ago had the unanimous approval of the Rand. Public meetings have recently been held at which most of the speakers showed but little knowledge either of the history of the subject or of what is meant by a university. They have suddenly discovered that their rich district is being exploited for the benefit of Capetown, and that their great thirst for university education has been left unslaked, deliberately, by the Union Government. They are greatly mistaken. If these public meetings create such a thirst they will prove a godsend, for such a thirst cannot exist in rich Johannesburg without almost immediately creating a worthy university. We think that the people of South Africa ought to be very well satisfied with the recent university legislation. Some years ago the question was a very vexed one. There were great jealousies between north and south, but still greater were the racial difficulties, both in the north and south, and of all these troubles nothing remains except an apparent grievance at Johannesburg. It is to be hoped that the men who drew up that magnanimous statement of two and a half years ago will take advantage of the present agitation to give Johannesburg a teaching university of its own.

THE NEWCASTLE MEETING OF THE BRITISH ASSOCIATION.

WHEN it was first suggested that the 1916 meeting of the British Association should be held in Newcastle-upon-Tyne the conditions in that city were very different from what they are now. The same might be said of any town in Great Britain; but the war has affected Newcastle itself with no uncertainty; and the Northumberland and Durham miners, as well as the shipyard and engine workers, have contributed handsomely to the ranks of our New Army.

With this war atmosphere thickening as the demands of the Navy and Army became greater, it was natural that considerable discussion should arise as to the wisdom of holding the meeting in Newcastle this year. It was, however, finally decided to hold the meeting on September 5-9, on the understanding that it would be a purely business meeting, shorn of all the festivities, such as garden parties and excursions, to which the members are accustomed. In fact, the meeting will be on similar lines to those on which the Manchester meeting was run last year.

In normal times the meeting would have centred itself round Armstrong College, and in consequence the work of the Sectional Arrangements

Committee would have been comparatively light; its spacious halls and lecture-rooms and its well-equipped laboratories would have provided that arrangement which is so eminently suited to a British Association meeting, viz. the reception-room and its adjuncts, as well as a large proportion of the section-rooms, in one building. Armstrong College, however, was taken over by the War Office during the early part of the war, and became, and still is, the 1st Northern General Hospital. Nevertheless, ample and satisfactory accommodation has been obtained; in several instances two or more sections will meet in the same building, and all the section-rooms are in close proximity to one another.

As in 1889, the reception-room will be the library of the College of Medicine, where also several section-rooms, smoke-rooms, writing-rooms, Press and general offices will be provided. The following list shows where the various sections will meet:—A (Mathematical and Physical Science), Trinity Church Rooms; B (Chemistry), College of Medicine; C (Geology), Friends' Meeting House; D (Zoology), Grand Assembly Rooms; E (Geography), Friends' Meeting House; F (Economic Science), Literary and Philosophical Society; G (Engineering), Institute of Mining and Mechanical Engineers; H (Anthropology), Friends' Meeting House; I (Physiology), College of Medicine; K (Botany), Grand Assembly Rooms; L (Educational Science), St. James's Church Rooms; M (Agriculture), Grand Assembly Rooms.

Sir Arthur Evans, F.R.S., the president-elect, will deliver his address on Tuesday evening, September 5, at the inaugural meeting, which will be held in the Town Hall. In the same hall on Thursday evening, September 7, Prof. William A. Bone, F.R.S., will deliver a discourse on "Flame and Flameless Combustion," and on September 8 Dr. P. Chalmers Mitchell, F.R.S., will deliver a discourse on evolution and the war.

Owing to circumstances incident to the war, it has been found to be impossible to arrange this year visits to the armament factories or the great shipbuilding and engineering works on the North-East Coast. A further announcement, however, may be made in the early future with regard to this matter. Nor will there be any excursions of the usual type, although it is understood that a number of the sections are promoting shorter excursions of special interest.

The Literary and Philosophical Society's Library, the Laing Art Gallery, the Hancock Museum of Natural History, and the Black Gate Museum will be open to members of the Association during the meeting. The majority of the clubs of Newcastle have granted temporary membership to those attending the meeting.

Following the course adopted at Manchester, the Association has again offered students and teachers of Newcastle and district associates' tickets at a reduced fee, and it is hoped that a large number will show their appreciation of this encouragement. Lectures to the public will be given in Newcastle, Sunderland, Durham, and Ashington by distinguished men.