

The Present Condition of the Aborigines of Central Australia.

INFORMATION lately received in this country discloses an appalling condition of affairs among the aborigines of the interior of Australia. The whole population is thoroughly polluted with disease, both tubercular and venereal, and the north-eastern tribes are doomed. It is anticipated that another ten years will see the last of such interesting tribes as the Dieri, Yanntowanta, Ngameni, and Nauworka. This is largely due to contact with the lower elements of European and immigrant Asiatic civilisation. Misdirected kindness, however, is also, to some extent, responsible. A liberal supply of Government blankets has been distributed among the tribes; they wear the blankets when working in the sun, and then, when thoroughly overheated, sleep on the ground; pneumonia follows as a natural consequence. Another cause of their disappearance is due to the difficulties attendant on food-supply. The game on which they subsist is killed off or driven away by the encroachment of civilisation. Distress from this cause has recently been aggravated by severe drought. The extent of the ravages arising from these various causes may be gauged by the fact that half a century ago it was estimated that there were 12,000 aborigines within 180 miles north and 200 miles east of Adelaide, and now there are not more than about 120 in that area. In the early eighties of last century Gason stated that if steps were not taken, multiplication of the aborigines would result in the disappearance of the European population, yet in this same area of which he wrote it is now estimated that at the outside there are not more than 2000.

The deplorable condition of the aboriginal population was discovered owing to the fact that during the war a number of expeditions were sent out to Central and Northern Australia in connection with the search for minerals for use in munition work. Dr. Herbert Basedow, a Protector of Aborigines in the service of the South Australian Government, who was a member of several of these expeditions, was then brought into close contact with the tribes. On his return to Adelaide at the end of the war he endeavoured to arouse the public conscience by a meeting in the Town Hall, at which he gave an undisguised account of what he had seen. As a result 500*l.* has been subscribed, and an equal amount promised by the Government, for the provision of medical relief. This sum has enabled Dr. Basedow to get together a small relief party. His first expedition on this work followed the course of the Strzelecki to Innamincka, thence along the Cooper, across the boundary into Queensland. Recrossing the border, the party visited Cordillo, Cadelga, Ringamurra, and Birdsville, thence following the Diamantina to Hergott Springs. One of the severest droughts on record was raging at the time; the heat was terrific—the average temperature was 116°–118° F.—and sand-storms blew for forty-eight hours at a time. No fewer than seven horses were abandoned exhausted along the route from Diamantina to Hergott Springs. The condition of the aborigines along the route is described by Dr. Basedow as “shocking.” Dr. Basedow has recently started on another expedition, on which he proposes to proceed along the head of the Australian Bight as far as Eucla, along the Nullarbor Plains to Port Augusta, thence northwards to Oodnadatta, and across the boundary to the McDonnell Ranges.

Valuable as is such provision of medical relief as is possible by these expeditions, it is obviously only a temporary palliative. One of the most effective of the measures adopted for the assistance of the aborigines,

whether directly under State protection or not, in the neighbouring State of Western Australia has been the establishment by the Government of a regular medical service. Further, while undesirable Europeans and Asiatics are permitted to mingle without control with the natives, it is inevitable that diseases will continue their ravages unchecked. A movement, which is receiving influential support, has been set on foot to induce the Government of South Australia to proclaim the north-west corner of the State, including the Musgrave, Mann, and Tomkinson Ranges, as an absolute reservation. It is hoped that it may also be possible to secure from the Commonwealth and the Western Australian Governments the proclamation of the adjoining ranges of the Northern Territory and Western Australia as strict reservations. This will probably be the last chance of preserving the Central Australian tribes from complete extinction.

E. N. FALLAIZE.

University and Educational Intelligence.

CAMBRIDGE.—Dr. Shillington Scales has been appointed University lecturer in medical radiology and electrology, and Mr. F. Lavington, Emmanuel College, Girdlers' lecturer in economics. Mr. J. Chadwick, Gonville and Caius College, has been elected to the Clerk Maxwell scholarship in experimental physics; Mr. H. F. Holden, St. John's College, to the Benn W. Levy research studentship in biochemistry; and Mr. A. J. Beamish, of Corpus Christi College, to the Wrenbury scholarship in economics.

The Marshall herbarium, comprising 23,000 sheets of British plants contained in dustproof oak cases, has been bequeathed to the University by the late Rev. E. S. Marshall, a keen and able field botanist, “unsurpassed as a collection of the critical flowering plants both in point of the number of interesting things he found and the care and industry he showed in selecting and pressing specimens of them.”

EDINBURGH.—The foundation-stone of the new University buildings was laid by the King on Tuesday last, and the Queen accepted the honorary degree of LL.D.

LIVERPOOL.—The King, on the recommendation of the Chancellor and Council of the Duchy of Lancaster, has contributed 100 guineas to the appeal fund.

SHEFFIELD.—Dr. W. E. S. Turner has been appointed professor of glass technology, Mr. J. Husband professor of civil engineering, Dr. Mellanby professor of pharmacology, and Mr. R. E. Pleasance demonstrator in pathology.

By an inadvertence these appointments were given in NATURE of June 24 under the heading “Leeds.”

PROF. F. FRANCIS has been appointed Pro-Vice-Chancellor of the University of Bristol in succession to Prof. Lloyd Morgan, who is about to resign the office.

DR. O. C. BRADLEY, principal of the Royal (Dick) Veterinary College, Edinburgh, has been elected president of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons in succession to Mr. J. McKinna.

A SCHOOL of medicine, surgery, and dentistry in connection with the University of Rochester, New York, has received an endowment of 1,800,000*l.* from the U.S. General Education Board and Mr. G. Eastman, of the Eastman Kodak Co. The contribution of the Board is 1,000,000*l.*, and that of Mr. Eastman 800,000*l.*

THE Eugenics Education Society has arranged for the holding of a summer school of eugenics and civics at Herne Bay College on July 31-August 14. The inaugural address will be delivered by Prof. A. Dendy on "Evolution in Human Progress," and there will be lectures and discussions on heredity, biology, eugenics, and sociology. The address of the society is 11 Lincoln's Inn Fields, W.C.2.

A SUMMER school of civics is to be held, under the auspices of the Civic Education League, at the Technical Institute, High Wycombe, Bucks, on July 31 to August 14. There are to be lectures on maternity and child welfare work, analytical psychology, and reconstruction problems; and courses on civics, sex education, local and central government, and anthropology have been arranged for. Further particulars can be obtained from the Secretary, Summer School of Civics, Leplay House, 65 Belgrave Road, S.W.1.

An important American academic change is announced in the simultaneous resignations of Dr. G. Stanley Hall as president of Clark University and of Dr. Edmund C. Sanford as president of Clark College, and the appointment of Dr. Wallace W. Atwood as single head of both the University and the college. Dr. Atwood has been professor of physiography at Harvard since 1913, and is at present in the West in charge of a field expedition for the U.S. Geological Survey. In addition to his executive position, he will occupy the chair of regional and physical geography at Clark University. Dr. Stanley Hall is retiring in order that he may devote his whole time to the completion of several books on psychology which he has had in hand for a considerable period. Dr. Sanford will take the chair of psychology at Clark University, which Dr. Stanley Hall is vacating together with the presidency.

We learn from *Science* that the following appropriations have recently been made by the U.S. General Education Board:—To the Washington University Medical School, St. Louis: For endowment, 250,000l.; for additional laboratory facilities and equipment, 14,000l. To Yale Medical School: For endowment (towards a total of 600,000l.), 200,000l. To Harvard Medical School: For improved facilities in obstetrics, 60,000l.; for the development of teaching in psychiatry, 70,000l. To Johns Hopkins Medical School: For development of a new department of pathology (towards a total of 120,000l.), 8000l. From the same source we learn that the Rockefeller Foundation has made appropriations as follow:—To Dalhousie University Medical School, Halifax: For buildings and equipment, 80,000l.; for endowments, 20,000l. To the Medical Research Foundation of Elisabeth, Queen of the Belgians, Brussels: For general purposes of medical research, 1,000,000 francs.

THE frontier between school and university has recently been the subject of much discussion. The Prime Minister's Committee on Science recommended that eighteen should be the normal age of entry from secondary schools to the universities, and in making that recommendation it was supported by all the witnesses who gave evidence on the subject. The Board of Education, by its efforts to standardise the Second School Examinations, and by watching the advanced courses given in schools, has done much to direct the studies of those who really are in the post-matriculation stage while at school; and the universities are faced, more than ever before, by the problem of how to arrange for students who enter with wide differences of attainment. There is but one solution: elasticity of organisation, both in the matter of examinations and in that of prescribed courses.

During the past year a consultative council, on which were representatives of seven universities and four associations of school teachers, has been formed by the Association of Science Teachers in order to discuss the overlapping of school and university training. As a result, a resolution was sent to the various universities urging them "to recognise the value of the post-matriculation work in efficient schools by accepting the passing in subjects in one of the approved Second School Examinations as exempting from the corresponding subjects in the Intermediate Examination and the first Medical Examination of the University." The Association of Science Teachers is to be congratulated on organising the discussions which have led to this expression of opinion by a body well constituted to view the situation from opposite sides.

Societies and Academies.

LONDON.

Faraday Society, June 14.—Prof. A. W. Porter, vice-president, in the chair.—Dr. A. Fleck and T. Wallace: Conduction of electricity through fused sodium hydrate. The resistance to the passage of current through fused caustic soda and its rate of change with temperature have been examined by a direct-current method. In view of the difficulties of containing the soda in a non-conducting non-porous vessel, the experiments have been carried out in the centre of a large mass of soda. The decomposition voltage has been studied and found to be a variable quantity, decreasing at the rate of 2.25×10^{-3} volts per degree Centigrade rise in temperature. This figure differs from the previously published figure of 2.95×10^{-3} . It has been found that when a current is passed through fused sodium hydrate between two sodium electrodes the current is always proportional to the applied E.M.F.—Dr. H. F. Haworth: The measurement of electrolytic resistances using alternating currents. An electrolytic cell acts like a capacity in series with a resistance. If this capacity and resistance be measured at various frequencies, they will be found to vary with the frequency. If the impedance of the cell is plotted vectorially with respect to the resistance for various frequencies, the locus is a straight line which cuts the resistance axis at infinite frequency. This gives the true resistance of the electrolyte.—J. L. Haughton: The measurement of electrical conductivity in metals and alloys at high temperatures. The study of the electrical conductivity of alloys has generally been carried out by measuring the conductivity of the alloys at room-temperature and plotting a curve connecting conductivity with composition, but much valuable information can be obtained by plotting the curve connecting the composition and temperature and using a series of such curves in the same way as the ordinary thermal curves. The paper describes a method which can be employed for this.—N. V. S. Knibbs and H. Palfreeman: The theory of electro-chemical chlorate and perchlorate formation. This paper is the outcome of a study of the electrolytic formation of chlorate and perchlorate based on recent large-scale operations. It aims at a presentation of the theory of the mechanism of chlorate and perchlorate formation and its application to their technical production. A series of investigations was undertaken in order to elucidate a number of doubtful points and to obtain data which were of importance in the technical control of the process.—J. B. Firth: Sorption of iodine by carbon. The sorption of iodine by carbon was studied over a period of five years; the forms of carbon used were lamp-black, blood carbon, sugar carbon, animal carbon,