

Report of the Commissioners for the Exhibition of 1851*

AMONG the manifold recollections aroused by the Royal Jubilee, it is fitting that we should spare a moment for a backward glance to that May day of eighty-four years ago, when a vast concourse of people from all parts of the world were thrilled by the opening of the Great Exhibition of 1851; and, therewith, a tribute to the potent and beneficent spirit of its creator, the Prince Consort. "A complete and beautiful triumph," wrote the Queen in her diary of the opening day, and it became evident in the course of the summer that the venture was to prove a financial triumph. Some weeks before the closing day, the Prince excogitated a scheme for the disposal of the surplus, which amounted to £186,000. Its leading ideas, as set out in a memorandum written by him at Osborne on August 10, were the purchase of the Kensington Gore estate and its use for perpetuating the objects of the exhibition, so "that the different industrial pursuits of mankind, arts, and science should not again relapse into a state of comparative isolation from each other".

The publication of the Commissioners' ninth report is well timed. The eighth was published in 1911, so that the present report covers almost exactly the period of the reign of H.M. King George, and it shows how during that period his grandfather's remarkable foresight has had an accumulative influence upon higher education and upon the progress of science and art. It expresses the belief that "the Kensington Estate to-day, with its Museums, Libraries, Teaching Institutions and Scientific Societies, fulfils in its range and completeness the aspirations of the Prince".

The policy of the Commissioners since 1911 has been guided by the decision then formed to spend no more money on buildings but to concentrate effort on subsidising youthful talent. It was in pursuance of this policy that they established the industrial bursaries, on which they now spend £3,750 a year, or more than a seventh of their income. They hoped thereby to bring the universities and their affiliated technical colleges into closer relation with scientific industry through introducing into industrial firms a larger proportion of men with a scientific training and outlook. The bursary is intended to make the holder independent of financial assistance from his parents during the period of his training and to remove any restriction upon his choice of occupation or place of abode, with suitable safeguards against the unfair exploitation of the scheme in the immediate pecuniary interests of the employer. In this way more than three hundred well-equipped young students have been helped into industry, and a number of the chief scientific and executive officers in the most important industrial concerns in Great Britain began their careers as bursars of the Royal Commission. Already fully 25 per cent of those employed in industry and the public services have been appointed to positions of considerable responsibility, while 13 per cent hold managerial or equivalent rank. Simultaneously "there has manifested itself a clearer appreciation of the benefits to be derived from a more liberal treatment of those in whose ranks are to be found many of our future captains of industry".

Another development since 1911 has been the

* Ninth Report of The Commissioners for the Exhibition of 1851. Pp. 44. (London: Spottiswoode, Ballantyne and Co., Ltd., 1935.)

foundation of a postgraduate scholarship in naval architecture, the need for which had been pointed out by H.M. King George when he was president of the Commissioners. Practically all the scholars appointed are in permanent positions on the design, research and administrative staffs of industrial firms and Government institutions.

Science research scholarships were first instituted by the Commissioners in 1891 under a system which continued in force with excellent results for thirty years, in the course of which they were supplemented by other schemes modelled upon them by various bodies interested in the promotion of science. In 1921 it was recognised that the provision made by the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research for scholarships of the same type justified the Commissioners in leaving this field and launching a project whereby a smaller number of awards of much higher value (maximum £450 a year for two or three years) should be made to enable a few experienced research workers in the universities of Great Britain to continue their investigations untrammelled by routine tasks. These are known as senior studentships and they cost £5,250 a year. At the same time, the value of the awards to students from the Dominions was increased to £280 and these, the Overseas Scholarships, absorb £6,250. No important university in the Dominions is, the Commissioners observe, without its quota of professors and lecturers who owe their early training in research to these awards, and any additional funds placed at the Commissioners' disposal might advantageously be applied to extending their scope to include the more recently developed countries of the Empire, and in particular India.

A census taken some years ago showed that the 560 scholars appointed between 1891 and 1929 had already provided 16 vice-chancellors, principals or deputy principals, 144 professors and many more readers and lecturers on the staffs of universities and colleges, and more than two hundred held positions of the first rank in the public services and scientific industries of the Empire. No fewer than forty have already been elected to fellowship of the Royal Society.

H.M. Government has been so impressed by the high value of the Commissioners' educational schemes that it has agreed to release them from former liability, under an offer made by them before the general trend of their policy was changed in the direction already indicated, to contribute £100,000 (of which £35,000 has already been paid) towards the cost of new buildings for the Science Museum, South Kensington.

East Anglian Herring*

THE Buckland Lectures for 1933 were given by Dr. W. C. Hodgson and forecast the publication of researches of great scientific interest relating to the East Anglian herring. They are the result of the team work of the scientific staff of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, and are quite sufficient in themselves to justify the foresight of the Ministry in the establishment of its laboratory at Lowestoft, in which such team work could be developed.

The working out of year groups in the herring catch, as shown in the rings of the scales, is carried much further and furnishes exact percentages,

* The Natural History of the Herring of the Southern North Sea being the Buckland Lectures for 1933. By Dr. William C. Hodgson. Pp. 120. (London: Edward Arnold and Co., 1934.) 3s. 6d. net.