Native Medical Practitioners in the South Seas

THE Government of Fiji recognized many years ago the need for a medical service for the native population, but realized that the employment of European doctors on a large scale was impracticable on account of cost, and that practitioners of their own race would be best suited to attend to the needs of the natives. The Government therefore established the Native School of Medicine at Suva for the benefit of Fijians, and for many years its 'graduates' did excellent work. A few years ago, the Rockefeller Foundation commenced investigations upon the problems of disease and of depopulation in these islands, and was so impressed with the success of this Native School that it offered to co-operate with the Fijian Government, and suggested the training of natives from eight groups of islands in the School at Suva. The Government agreed to work in conjunction with the Foundation, and the School was then reorganized and reconstituted in its present form. The School is residential, and is attached to the Suva Memorial Hospital. Its direction is in European hands, the students are under reasonable discipline, and the cost of maintenance is small—something less than £3,000 a year—which is contributed in various ways.

SIR JAMES BARRETT, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Melbourne, gives an account of the activities of the School in an article in the *Morning Post* of August 7. The students are mostly Polynesians, and must pass a matriculation examination before admission, based upon the New Zealand proficiency examination, which ensures a good knowledge of English. The first year of the present four-years' course is devoted to elementary basic science, and the remaining three years provide the student with a sound, practical medical training in the Suva Hospital. After graduation, the practitioners return to their own islands as health or medical officers among their own people. The initial salary of a graduate is £60 a year, rising to a maximum of £150, which suffices for local requirements. If no European doctor is available, as is often the case, the native practitioner may attend to the medical requirements of Europeans. At present, eighty-four practitioners are at work, distributed over Fiji, Samoa, Tonga, the Cook Islands, Gilbert and Ellice Islands, Solomon Islands, and New Hebrides; of these, Fiji takes fifty-six. In addition, native nurses have been trained in large numbers; the Suva Hospital is staffed by twenty European and twenty Fijian nurses, and there are forty-seven obstetric nurses in Fiji alone. Sir James Barrett endorses the very favourable opinion on the efficiency of the School and of the practitioners it has trained expressed by Profs. Wright and Buckmaster, who, having visited Australia and New Zealand on behalf of the Royal College of Surgeons of England, passed through Suva on their return journey. Sir James envisages the adoption of some such system to meet the medical needs of the natives in other parts of the British Empire, referring to the existence of somewhat similar schools already founded in West Africa and Uganda.

The Radcliffe Observatory in South Africa

THE 'turn-over' article in *The Times* of August 7 by Mr. H. E. Wood, the Union Astronomer, deals with astronomy in South Africa in general, and refers in particular to the forthcoming re-establishment of the Radcliffe Observatory at Pretoria. The history of astronomy in South Africa begins in 1685, when Father Tachard called at the Cape on his way to Siam and determined the longitude by observations of Jupiter's satellites. During the next century, two expeditions visited the Cape, and 1820 saw the foundation of the Royal Observatory, which has made such notable contributions to our knowledge of the southern stars. In 1834 Sir John Herschel landed there and made his famous catalogues of nebulæ and double stars. There are now four other observatories in South Africa: the Union Observatory and the southern station of Yale University Observatory at Johannesburg, and those of Harvard and Michigan at Bloemfontein. The Radcliffe Observatory, for more than a hundred and sixty years at Oxford, will, it is hoped, have started its new life at Pretoria within the next two years. Good progress is being made with the construction of its 74-inch reflector by Sir Howard Grubb, Parsons and Co. This will differ in several respects from its sister telescope at Toronto, as it will have, in addition to facilities for observation at the Newtonian and Cassegrain focuses, an arrangement for sending the beam of light down the polar axis to a fixed spectrograph, and it will be driven by a synchronous motor, the frequency of the alternating current being controlled by a tuning fork. The disk of Pyrex glass for the large mirror has been cast by the Corning Glass Co. and is now being annealed. The five secondary mirrors will be of fused silica, and the disks for these are being made by the Thermal Syndicate, Ltd.

Archæological Excavations in Britain

WITH the coming of university and school vacations, numbers of voluntary workers are released for archæological investigations in the field. Since July, excavations have been resumed or initiated on many sites in Britain. The scheme of training in field work through voluntary assistance organized by Dr. R. E. Mortimer and the late Mrs. Wheeler is again in being, this year on an extended scale. Nearly a hundred students drawn from universities in the British Isles, Australia, India, Canada, the United States and China are at work on the continued excavation of Maiden Castle, near Dorchester, under the direction of Dr. Wheeler and Col. C. D. Drew. Although the season has only just opened, some important results already have emerged. On the hill-top in the neighbourhood of the temple of the Roman period discovered in 1934, according to a report in *The Times* of August 14, further stone age habitations, with stone implements and pottery, have been discovered. A series of pits has been uncovered, in which were pottery and animal bones, including those of large oxen of a type now extinct. The neolithic site underlying the fortifications is also being explored. Extensive areas containing stone implements and pottery