NATURE

No. 3981 SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 1946 Vol. 157

CONTENTS

Editorial and Publishing Offices
MACMILLAN & CO., LTD.,
ST. MARTIN'S STREET, LONDON, W.C.2.
Telephone Number : Whitehall 8831
Telegrams : Phusis Lesquare London
Advertisements should be addressed to ,
T. G. Scott & Son, Ltd., Talbot House, 9 Arundel Street, London, W.C.2
Telephone : Temple Bar 1942
The annual subscription rate is £4 10 0, payable in advance, Inland or Abroad.

INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY COLLABORATION

IN the two years since the British Association's Committee on Post-War University Education issued its report on world-wide university collaboration, much has been done to facilitate such co-operation ; and the importance of the contribution of the universities in building the post-war world has become steadily more widely recognized. The universities are vitally concerned with the restoration of full freedom of communication by publication of the results of research, the exchange of ideas by publication and the exchange of visits of men of science and other scholars, upon which so much emphasis has been placed in recent months. Indeed, they must share some responsibility for the action necessary to secure and enlarge the freedom which is one of their most precious traditions—a tradition which has been gravely imperilled in some countries. With the imposition of a particular ideology, the ancient freedom of the universities has completely disappeared, and its restoration is a necessary condition of any true university fellowship and co-operation in the international field.

The re-establishment of full freedom of communication in the intellectual field is one of the first and most urgent of the tasks which the War has left for the universities—and it is a task the execution of which will be shared with professional organisations and learned bodies of many kinds. Along with it goes the re-establishment of some common traditions and standards of learning, of cultural, spiritual and moral values, without which it will be idle to expect the United Nations or any other international organisation to be effective. That, of course, is one reason for the establishment of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, the need for which was discussed tentatively in the British Association Committee's report. The belief expressed in the preamble to the constitution of that Organisation—"in full and equal opportunities for education for all, in the unrestrictive pursuit of objective truth, and in the free exchange of ideas and knowledge"—is inherent in the very idea of a university. The universities, in fact, cannot stand apart from an Organisation pledged "to develop and to increase the means of communication between their peoples and to employ these means for the purposes of mutual understanding and a truer and more perfect knowledge of each other's lives".

The very formation of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation is thus a further challenge to the universities of Britain to shed that insularity which received such pointed comment two years ago at a Conference of the Association of University Professors and Lecturers of the Allied Countries in Great Britain. It may well be a further reason in support of the world council of universities linked up with the proposed advisory council of universities of Great Britain, into which the British Association Committee in its report suggested the Association of Professors and Lecturers of

Allied Countries might develop. The Association of University Teachers, in the second half of Part 3 of its Report on University Developments*, most of which is concerned with the international functions of a university, endorses the same idea in hoping for the establishment of an international university institute.

This part of the report of the Association of University Teachers adds very little, however, to this discussion, or to that of the British Association Committee's report, on such subjects as the exchange of staff and students and the mutual recognition of qualifications; although in the meantime, such activities have been specifically indicated as among the purposes of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation. The tasks now confronting the universities in the international field are nevertheless rightly summed up as participation in the rehabilitation of the universities and of the academic life of the devastated countries of Europe and of Asia; and in the building up of permanent fruitful intercourse with colleagues in other countries.

In its widest sense, as the Association of University Teachers remarks, the international function of a university is that of affording opportunities to learn something of the whole world and its problems, which are likely to affect more and more the destiny of each individual country. If the universities are in future to carry the further responsibility of including schools of education and the training of teachers in their purview, it will be even more essential to implement the views expressed in this report that no student should leave the university without having had ample opportunity to broaden his horizon in this widest sense, and that more teaching should be provided in such subjects as twentieth-century European and Commonwealth history, human geography and contemporary political thought. Similarly, however, it is important to discharge the university's international responsibility in the narrower sense of establishing more and closer relations with the universities of other lands, for example, by promoting the meeting and interchange of teachers and of students.

The practical problems of re-equipping universities, libraries and similar institutions damaged by the War are already receiving the attention of the new Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, and no doubt this immense task will call for the services of experts in the universities in an advisory capacity. Equally important, however, is the provision of facilities for study and research for university teachers abroad who are without such facilities in their own countries, as well as for many students who cannot pursue their studies satisfactorily or completely at home. These are matters in which the universities can act individually and collectively, and they should also consider the claims for support of the International Association of University Professors and Lecturers, formed in September 1944, with the object of developing "academic fraternity among university teachers" on the basis of the "freedom of teaching and research". Such support is needed to counter nationalist and racialist distortions of research and to liberate science and learning from the control of governments and political groups.

The particular contribution of the Association of University Teachers here will be the encouragement of, and co-operation with, free associations of university teachers in all lands. Relations must again be entered into with such associations, through correspondence and periodical conferences at which the issues facing the universities of all lands can be debated and agreement made for joint action. Besides this, there is great need for extending the international system of visiting lecturers; in this respect the Association considers that the most generally useful arrangement is that which provides for a course of about half a dozen lectures. To obtain the full benefits of interchange, however, longer periods are necessary, and the report suggests the establishment of visiting professorships, supernumerary to the existing establishment, to which teachers of standing from abroad should be invited for a period normally not less than one academic year. The Association believes that the establishment of such professorships in all countries, and the acceptance of interchange as a normal feature of university life, would be to the general advantage.

Such exchange schemes should also be open to members of university staffs who have not reached professorial status, and visiting fellowships are suggested. Much good might accrue if pairs of universities in different countries initiated alliances of mutual advantage in respect of opportunities for interchanges and other matters, as has already been done by the Imperial College of Science and Technology in London and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. A valuable adjunct of any scheme of interchanges of staff would be the provision of special rooms in university hostels or halls of residence, in which visitors could be officially entertained, if their stay were prolonged more than a few days. The facilities for international migration in the form of travelling scholarships and fellowships which existed before the War should be revived as soon as conditions permit; and the report also recommends that the importance of increasing such facilities should be impressed upon government agencies such as the British Council and upon the great educational trusts.

In regard to students, the report emphasizes the desirability of overseas students living in the university halls of residence, in order to promote that contact with British university students which could be a vital cultural force in student life. Where foreign students are received in any considerable number, a special tutor or tutors should be appointed by each university to look after their welfare. The report praises the work of the National Union of Students in regard to the exchange of shorter visits

* Association of University Teachers. Report on University Developments. Part 3: Comprising the Education of Teachers: The International Functions of a University. Pp. 8. (Bristol: J. W. Arrowsmith, Ltd., 1945.) 1s.

of students through holidays, holiday courses and conferences; and in regard to finance, points out that the ideal of interchange will fail of one of its primary objects if students are compelled by financial stress to spend all their time within the confines of university life. They must be able to move about, see the country, and make contact with various groups of the population.

Finally, the report considers very briefly the question of the mutual recognition of entrance requirements, courses and degrees. This is a matter in which the professions may also be concerned, and for those of medicine, law and teaching may involve inter-governmental agreement, as well as the collaboration of the universities in exploring the problems, which is clearly the first step. The report also looks for the establishment of an international university institute which would perform for the universities of the world as a whole those functions for which the Universities Bureau of the British Empire was founded in connexion with the imperial universities.

Some of the functions of that Bureau may well come under the consideration of the Commonwealth Scientific Conference to be held in June, for in regard to the collection and provision of up-to-date information on all phases of university life and organisation there is considerable room for improvement of the facilities as yet available within the British Empire. Whether the present Universities Bureau could be adequately staffed and financed for this purpose, or whether the work would be better done in regard to the world as a whole by the proposed institute, may be a matter for discussion; but the Association visualizes functions for the proposed institute which go far beyond anything yet attempted by the Universities Bureau in respect of the Empire alone. Other suggestions are for a library of documentation to aid in the comparative study of university systems; the collection of materials for research into methods of instruction, into new educational movements within the sphere of the universities and into the problem of student welfare; the provision of a centre of organisation for international university conferences, and an instrument for establishing contacts between universities and for carrying through negotiations, especially in regard to the machinery for interchange of staff and students—these are all so far beyond the present resources of the Bureau, that it may not be worth while to expand it to deal with them if such functions can conveniently be fulfilled for the world as a whole by an international institute. But some clear thinking is called for on the part of university authorities of Great Britain in these matters before the Commonwealth Scientific Conference meets, so that they may be ready with constructive proposals to meet the demand they will then most assuredly have to face, for the provision of more adequate information regarding their collective facilities and resources, and for more efficient means of communication and interchange between themselves and other universities of the Empire, apart altogether from their international responsibilities in the widest sense.

SCIENCE, FAITH AND EDUCATION

The Authoritarian Attempt to Capture Education

Papers from the 2nd Conference on the Scientific Spirit and Democratic Faith. Pp. x+152. (New York: King's Crown Press; London: Oxford University Press, 1945.) 16*s*. 6*d*. net.

THIS record of a sustained symposium, held in New York in 1945, provides a book of quite unusual value. With rare exceptions, the contributors play their parts under a strong sense of responsibility, aware both of the urgency of the great matters they are discussing and of the issues that hang upon the finding of a solution. One could wish that they were all equally well agreed concerning the depth of the level at which a solution must be sought. But the actual discussion is marked by the sincerity, the seriousness, and the candour which so great a theme rightly evokes.

The central interest of the book is education, particularly higher education. Although at times the discussion seems to take the form of a head-on clash between science and tradition, it has certainly not that character as a whole. The more responsive participants are fully alive to the truth that education is not conceivable apart from the continuous recreating of a cultural tradition. They are concerned not with a battle against tradition, but with the need, now so urgent, of developing and reinterpreting it so as to incorporate the attitudes and the temper of life and thought which are characteristic of science. They seek, that is, a synthesis, not an outright victory.

Some part of the discussion consists of an attack upon that out-of-date traditionalist solution which is associated with the name of President Hutchins of the University of Chicago, who would make a study of the 'hundred best books' the substance of general higher education. President Hutchins' critics find it easy enough, occasionally in devastating fashion, to demolish his proposed solution. In the opinion of this non-scientist reviewer, they are much less successful in shaking the presuppositions upon which his not well-considered proposals rest.

The title given to the symposium calls for remark. Does not the loosely used word 'Authoritarian' beg the question? One can see what it is intended to convey. But the use of the word in this condemnatory sense does excite the query whether, just as education is not conceivable apart from tradition, it is not also inconceivable apart from authority? If so, a doctrine of authority is a necessary part of a philosophy of education. Should the critic answer that the scientific intelligence is itself the authority, that still leaves some vital educational issues unanswered, especially those that arise in the education of young children and in the field of moral standards and actions. It is possible that preoccupation with the higher levels and the more purely intellectual fields may account for some neglect of an issue which, for the student of education as such, must always loom large.

The general impression left by the book is, however, that beyond all doubt men of science are on the side of the angels, that they are even more acutely aware than the rest of us of the vast crisis to which all our Western culture has been brought by the development of science, and even more earnest and resolute in searching for the moral and intellectual synthesis which will provide a firm foundation for reconstruction. That much can be said and should be said with all possible emphasis. To regard men of