

use the expressive slang of the day, "regular fellows."

The last few years have taught us all how small a reserve of food there is even in normal times. Largely as a result of the cataclysmic war famine now stalks over much of the earth. It needs no Malthus to convince us that an adequate food supply will become more and more the great problem of mankind. In spite of the haziness that envelops most of our present theories of productivity, one can scarcely fail to have faith that it is the half light that precedes dawn. The complex and obscure factors involved in crop production need for their solution a far greater number of botanically trained investigators. With clearer theoretical understanding of these factors, there is every reason to believe that the earth will be made to yield more abundantly. It is to this field of investigation so vital to human welfare, that I confidently hope botanists will more and more devote their energies, both as a matter of duty to mankind, and as an earnest of faith in their science and the services it can render.

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SCIENTIFIC EVENTS

THE CARNEGIE TRUST FOR SCOTTISH UNIVERSITIES

THE *British Medical Journal* states that the annual meeting of the Carnegie Trust for the Universities of Scotland was held in a committee-room of the House of Lords, on February 9, with Lord Balfour of Burleigh in the chair. Lord Balfour said that the principal event of last year was the allocation of grants for the quinquennial period of 1920-25. In addition to the £200,000 from income, it had been resolved to allocate from the reserve fund £49,000. The explanation of this was that during the war the students at the universities were fewer, and therefore the trustees saved on the payment of fees. It would have been absurd to save that money and put it to the reserve, when many of the same students were coming back after the war and

wanted it. The trustees thought it right, as a temporary measure, to take it out of the reserve fund, and give it to them to pay their fees. Under the research scheme it had been agreed that as an experiment for a period of three years the following annual grants be offered to the universities to be spent in payment of half the salaries of persons engaged as part-time assistants or lecturers on condition that they devoted not less than half their time to research, and that the universities should contribute the other half of the salaries from other sources—Glasgow and Edinburgh £1,000 each, St. Andrews and Aberdeen £800 each. It was hoped that much good to the universities would result from this combination of teaching and research, and the scheme had been well received by the universities. Although the amount available for assistance to students was now fully £60,000, there was a deficit of £8,538 for 1919-20. The universities were now increasing their tuition fees, and as a result the poor student would be poorer than ever. Thus the difficulties were very great. For many years the trustees had been able to pay all eligible applicants the whole of their class fees, but in 1911-12 they had had to have an allowance system, because the income would not cover the whole of the fee, and since then the trustees had been paying only a part of the fees. The situation would be further changed in the current year owing to the increase in tuition fees.

The discussion in which Lord Haldane, Lord Sands, and others took part, centered chiefly in the problem of allocating assistance to the students. It was agreed that steps must be taken to eliminate from the beneficiaries of the fund those applicants whose circumstances were such as to render assistance unnecessary. Proposals were made for strengthening the declaration made by applicants and for an inquiry into individual circumstances. The suggestions were discussed, but a decision will not be reached until the alternatives have been further considered in the light of the views expressed by university authorities and others interested.