

SCIENCE

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THE UNIVERSITY AND RESEARCH¹

THE main sources of research in America have been, and must continue to be, the universities. We have a few first class special research institutes; and we have a good many laboratories of industrial research and development. There are more of these than is popularly known; five hundred, perhaps, counting many small ones. But their work is directed more towards the attack of specific problems of development in the special industries which support them, and less towards the fundamental science that underlies these industries. In some of the larger of these industrial research laboratories, however, able investigators are at work and fundamental research of a high quality is carried on. But in all of the few special institutes and the many industrial laboratories taken together the research output is much less than that which comes from the universities. In addition, of one thing very important to the maintenance of research in the country these special institutes and industrial laboratories do almost nothing at all. That is the development and training of new research workers. This is done almost exclusively in the universities and colleges. Anything, therefore, which lessens the interest and activities of the universities in research, and hence reduces their actual output of research and research workers, is a menace to our national strength and well-being. For this strength and well-being depend, in a very large measure, on scientific research and discovery.

The conspicuous role played by science in the war from its very beginning, and the pressing necessity for solving serious war problems involving scientific investigation, brought very

¹ A paper read at the educational conference, May 13, 1921, held at the University of Minnesota, in connection with the inauguration of President L. H. Coffman.