

Bull, Richard Joseph (1874-1927)

Richard Joseph Bull was born at Bendigo, Victoria, in 1874. He was dux of Mr. Pearce's grammar school and won an exhibition giving entrance to the Melbourne University. While at the University he obtained prizes and honours each year, including the Sir Baldwin Spencer prize. He graduated MB BS in 1896 and being one of the six highest on the list he became entitled to a year's residence at the Melbourne Hospital. After a period as resident surgeon at the hospital he was appointed to the University under Dr. Thomas Cherry in the department of bacteriology. In 1901 he obtained the degree of doctor of medicine, and in 1903-4 he was resident medical tutor at Trinity College.

When Dr. Bull had been at the University for 12 months an outbreak of bubonic plague occurred, and he took charge of the plague quarantine station. After a visit to Great Britain, where he pursued his studies, he succeeded Dr. Cherry, who had been appointed professor of agriculture, in the position of lecturer in bacteriology and director of the bacteriological laboratory. The work of Dr. Bull for the bacteriological department was of the greatest value. For 22 years he was the head of this department, and under his guidance it became one of the most practical and most important branches of University research work. His department came to be used by the Department of Public Health and by private doctors throughout the State.

During the war he made the typhoid vaccine, which was used for the Victorian troops, and working in conjunction with Professor H. A. Woodruff, he produced a serum for use in the meningitis outbreak.

In 1920 he made a second visit to Great Britain. Upon his return to Australia the great increase in the work of the department made it necessary for him to spend many hours at night in the laboratory. Last year he again visited Europe, mainly with the object of conducting researches into problems associated with cancer and tuberculosis. While abroad he attended the British Medical Association conference at Nottingham as an Australian delegate. Upon his return to Melbourne he was elected president for 1927 of the Victorian branch of the British Medical Association, a position which he held until his death.

Professor Osborne's Tribute "As acting dean of the faculty of medicine, and as a colleague of long standing, I should like to pay a tribute to the high qualities of the late Dr. Bull," said Professor Osborne last night. He was a most indefatigable worker in his department, and, indeed, the public has no idea of the enormous amount of work he carried out. He gave instruction not only in medicine, but also to the students of agriculture, hygiene, domestic science, and other subjects. His colleagues who went to him for help always found him exceedingly anxious and willing to be of service, and the cheerfulness of his manner will long be a pleasant memory. The University has indeed lost one of its most faithful officers."

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Draft by Allan Mawdsley

No photograph yet located.