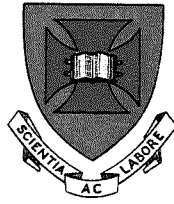


UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND



EDWIN CLIFFORD WEBB

"MR. CHANCELLOR,

ON THIS MOST MEMORABLE OCCASION, WE HAVE GREAT PRIDE IN HONOURING EDWIN CLIFFORD WEBB, A DISTINGUISHED SON OF THE CAMBRIDGE SCHOOL OF BIOCHEMISTRY AND THE FOUNDATION PROFESSOR BIOCHEMISTRY IN THIS UNIVERSITY.

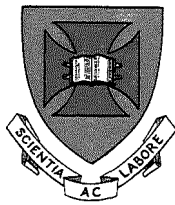
THE HISTORY OF THE CAMBRIDGE SCHOOL IS A CRHONICLE OF GREAT MINDS: SIR FREDERICK GOWLAND HOPKINS, "HOPPY", THE FUNDATOR ET PRIMUS ABBAS OF ENGLISH BIOCHEMISTRY; SIR RUDOLPH PETERS; DOROTHY AND JOSEPH NEEDHAM; MALCOLM DIXON, WHO MADE THE FIRST SERIOUS ATTEMPT AT THE PURIFICATION OF ANIMAL ENZYME, AND J.B.S. HALDANE, "HOPPY'S" SECOND-IN-COMMAND FOR A DECADE FROM 1923 AND WHOSE BOOK SIMPLY CALLED "ENZYMES" FIRST PUBLISHED IN 1930 IS STILL A BEST SELLER.

THE HISTORY IS ALSO A CHRONICAL OF REAL PEOPLE AS HALDANE FOUND WHEN HE WAS FIRED BY A UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE CALLED THE SEX VIRI - 'MEANING THE SIX MEN, NOT THE SEX WEARY' AS HE HAD PLEASURE IN NOTING. ON APPEAL, HALDANE WAS REINSTATED AND THE NAME OF THE COMMITTEE WAS PRUDENTLY CHANGED AND ITS MEMBERSHIP INCREASED BY ONE. IT IS PERHAPS NOT SURPRISING THAT THE UNIVERSITY IN ANOTHER CAMBRIDGE, HARVARD, LATER ESTABLISHED A COMMITTEE OF EIGHT TO DEAL WITH SIMILAR PROBLEMS.

IT WAS TO THE CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY AND SCHOOL THAT EDWIN WEBB WENT ON AN OPEN SCHOLARSHIP TO CLARE COLLEGE. GRADUATING WITH FIRST CLASS HONOURS IN 1942, HE JOINED MALCOLM DIXON'S GROUP IN THE MINISTRY OF SUPPLY. DIXON'S GROUP WAS THEN STUDYING THE MODE OF ACTION OF WAR GASES. AS WITH MANY ASPECTS OF MILITARY-ORIENTED RESEARCH IN WAR TIM, DISCOVERIES WERE MADE WHICH LED TO IMPORTANT AND LASTING PEACE-TIME BENEFITS. THE ABILITY OF BRITISH ANTI-LEWISTE TO REVERSE THE POISONING CAUSED BY THE HIGHLY TOXIC ARSENICAL WAR GAS, LEWISITE, HAD PRACTICAL AND LIFE-SAVING CONSEQUENCES IN CLINICAL MEDICINE. BRITISH ANTI-LEWISITE IS NOT ONLY THE ACCEPTED TREATMENT FOR ARSENIC POISONING, BUT ALSO PREVENTS OR REDUCES ACUTE POISONING CAUSED BY MERCURY, CADMIUM, BISMUTH, CHROMIUM AND NICKEL.

IN 1944, HE WAS AWARDED A PRESTIGIOUS BEIT MEMORIAL RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP WHICH HE HELD UNTIL 1946, WHEN HE WAS APPOINTED UNIVERSITY DEMONSTRATOR - AND LATER, UNIVERSITY LECTURER AT CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY. IT WAS IN THIS PERIOD THAT HE CHOSE TO CONCENTRATE HIS ENERGY AND TALENTS

UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND



EDWIN CLIFFORD WEBB (cont.)

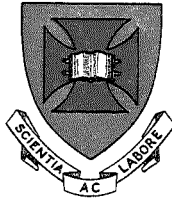
ON THE STUDY OF ISOLATED AND PURIFIED ENZYMES AND FROM HIS LABORATORY THERE EMANATED A SERIES OF PIONEERING PAPERS ON THE PROPERTIES OF THE ESTERASES. THERE APPEARED IN NATURE IN 1949, A PAPER BY BOURSNELL AND WEBB DESCRIBING THE INHIBITION OF A HORSE LIVER ESTERASE, A PAPER WHICH ESTABLISHED THE FOUNDATIONS OF QUANTITATIVE ACTIVE-SITE ENZYMOLOGY.

THE YEAR 1958 SAW THE PRODUCTION OF A MONOGRAPH WITH MALCOLM DIXON AS CO-AUTHOR, WITH THE FELICITOUSLY SUCCINCT TITLE OF "ENZYMES". THE AUTHORS OF 950-PAGE MONOGRAPHS ON ESOTERIC SUBJECT MATERIAL DO NOT EXPECT TO BECOME BEST SELLERS; BUT IN THIS INSTANCE SUCH FAME CAN BE SAID TO HAVE COME THEIR WAY. "DIXON AND WEBB", OF WHICH THE THIRD EDITION IS NOT IN PRESS, HAS BECOME A CLASSIC, AND ALREADY APPEARS IN RUSSIAN, JAPANESE AND ITALIAN TRANSLATIONS. THE DISTINGUISHED SCIENTIFIC REPUTATION WHICH PROFESSOR WEBB HAS EARNED FOR HIMSELF BOTH IN CAMBRIDGE AND IN THE UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND HAS BEEN REFLECTED BY HIS EDITORSHIP OF THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL, BIOCHIMICA ET BIOPHYSICA ACTA, AND HIS MEMBERSHIP OF THE 10-MAN INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION ON BIOCHEMICAL NOMENCLATURE.

EDWIN WEBB CAME TO QUEENSLAND IN 1962 TO OCCUPY THE FOUNDATION CHAIR OF BIOCHEMISTRY, IN A DEPARTMENT WHICH HAD BELATEDLY SEVERED THE UMBILICAL CORD ATTACHING IT TO ITS MOTHER, THE DEPARTMENT OF PHYSIOLOGY. WEBB QUICKLY ATTRACTED AROUND HIM A GROUP OF ABLE POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS PURSUING THE LINE OF RESEARCH ON THE PHYSICAL AND FUNCTIONAL PROPERTIES OF HYDROLYTIC ENZYMES WHICH HE HAD ESTABLISHED IN BRITAIN. IT IS A TRIBUTE TO THE QUALITY OF HIS LEADERSHIP AND TO THE SCHOLARLY QUALITY OF THE MEN WHO JOINED THE DEPARTMENT THAT WE SHOULD BE IN A POSITION TO BE ABLE TO EXPRESS UNRESERVED PRIDE AT THE CONTINUING EXCELLENCE OF THE WORK PROCEEDING FROM THE DEPARTMENT WHICH HE FOUNDED.

IT IS A DOCTORATE OF SCIENCE WHICH THIS UNIVERSITY HAS PLEASURE IN CONFERRING UPON EDWIN WEBB. BUT INDEED IT WOULD BE EQUALLY FITTING IF A HIGHER DEGREE IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION WERE TO BE AWARDED HONORIS CAUSA; FOR TO BE SURE HIS TALENTS IN ADMINISTRATION HAVE BEEN AS NOTABLE AS HIS SCIENTIFIC ACHIEVEMENTS. DISCERNING MINDS RECOGNIZED THIS EARLY IN HIS CAREER, FOR IN HIS TWENTIES HE WAS ELECTED AS A MEMBER OF THE CAMBRIDGESHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL. A QUICK AND ANALYTICAL MIND IS HIS, ONE WHICH IDENTIFIES PROBLEMS AND FINDS COMMONSENSE, HUMANE, AND ACCEPTABLE

UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND



EDWIN CLIFFORD WEBB (cont.)

SOLUTIONS. IT HAS BEEN INEVITABLE THAT HEAVY ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES HAVE BEEN PLACED UPON HIS SHOULDERS, INCLUDING IN THIS UNIVERSITY, PRESIDENCY OF THE STAFF ASSOCIATION, PRESIDENCY OF THE PROFESSORIAL BOARD, A HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL AND POPULAR TERM OF OFFICE AS DEPUTY VICE-CHANCELLOR (ACADEMIC), AND IN THE COMMUNITY AT LARGE, PRESIDENCY OF THE AUSTRALIAN BIOCHEMICAL SOCIETY, MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEES OF THE NATIONAL HEALTH AND MEDICAL RESEARCH COUNCIL, AND - INDICATIVE OF HIS ASTONISHING VERSATILITY - CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT'S INQUIRY INTO CHIROPRACTIC, OSTEOPATHY, HOMEOPATHY AND NATUROPATHY.

IT HAS BEEN THE MOST FORTUNATE BLENDING OF AN OUTSTANDING CAREER IN SCIENCE AND IN UNIVERSITY ADMINISTRATION THAT RECOMMENDED PROFESSOR WEBB AS THE ADMIRABLE CHOICE OF MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY AS THEIR VICE-CHANCELLOR. BECAUSE HIS DEPARTURE IN 1976 WAS SO MUCH REGRETTED, IT IS SINGULARLY PLEASING THAT HE SHOULD BE WITH US TODAY.

MR. CHANCELLOR, I PRESENT TO YOU EDWIN CLIFFORD WEBB, MASTER OF ARTS (CAMBRIDGE), DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (CAMBRIDGE), FELLOW OF THE ROYAL AUSTRALIAN CHEMICAL INSTITUTE, FOR ADMISSION TO THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF SCIENCE 'HONORIS CAUSA'."

The Chancellor says -

"EDWIN CLIFFORD WEBB, BY THE AUTHORITY VESTED IN ME AND UPON THE RECOMMENDATION OF THE VICE-CHANCELLOR, I ADMIT YOU TO THE RANK AND PRIVILEGES OF THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF SCIENCE 'HONORIS CAUSA' IN THE UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND."