

report was tersely critical of tradition. Referring to the policies followed in the past in Britain it commented: "The result of limiting the support for Oriental and Slavonic studies to the language departments has meant that some of the universities have found themselves caught in a cul-de-sac from which it has proved difficult to escape. That the cul-de-sac was filled with the most valuable treasures of classical scholarship has obscured the lack of balance between these studies and those undertaken in other faculties and departments, and between classical and modern studies." [Ibid., p. 46.]

To pose this issue simply in terms of "classical" versus "modern" is perhaps misleading. The social scientist's enquiry may be directed to "modern" problems — to the study of new elites in South-east Asian societies, to problems of economic growth, or to patterns of urban concentration — but they may equally well be concerned with the structure of political authority in the 14th century Indonesian empire of Madjapahit, or with the character of a wet rice economy in 10th century Angkor. The distinction refers to basic methods of approach rather than to the period in which the study is set. In the last analysis the sharpness of the distinction needs to be blurred. The classicist may find his subject illuminated by the findings of the social scientist; the social scientist would be unwise were he, in his pursuit of an understanding of contemporary society, to forget the inertia of traditional forces. The difference of approach has been sharp in the past, however, and it is likely to remain something of an issue. The sub-committee's demand for an extension of modern rather than classical studies was not, of course, intended to deny the validity of the latter, but merely to deny its exclusive claims. Nor must its strictures be taken to imply a view of the unimportance of languages. Obviously modern studies must involve the growth of vigorous language departments. For social scientists language may be a tool rather than an end in itself, but the tool can only be made available if there is a recognition of the legitimacy of language study conducted for its own sake. The development of the Monash Centre of South-east Asian Studies must include the extension of language study beyond those we are now teaching — Indonesian and Malay — to the other languages of the region, and to classical as well as modern languages.

This brief account of our organization and our plans should not end without a word of warning. The device of centring an area programme on the discipline departments may seem attractive to some on the grounds that it can enable an area programme to be developed without the creation of an expensive departmental organization. That is in part the case, but it should not be assumed that a successful centre can be established on the cheap. The financial claims of research in history and the social sciences have only just begun to be recognized. For years it has been assumed too easily that while physics or chemistry or engineering required extensive funds to support them, the work of the social scientist could be carried on adequately without such lavish expenditure. The social scientists, by accepting their poverty, may have helped to contribute to this view. This attitude is passing, but it may not be out of place to point briefly to some of the items of expenditure for which a Centre of South-east Asian Studies must budget. For the historian access to records by micro-filming or by travel is essential. The anthropologist

must live in the society he is studying. So must the political scientist. For the geographer, too, travel to the field is an essential part of research and must be accepted as such. Provision for the postgraduate scholarships represents another major item if a research programme is to be developed, and in this field, as in others, the growth of an adequate library is absolutely necessary. Given our geographical position it is quite shocking to realize that no Australian library can make the remotest claim to completeness in the building-up of a South-east Asian collection. This needs to be one of our first objectives.

DUKE AND DUCHESS OF GLOUCESTER VISIT THE UNIVERSITY

Their Royal Highnesses, the Duke and Duchess of Gloucester, visited Monash on Friday, March 26. The Duchess made a brief tour of the main library and was accompanied by Lady Blackwood, Dr. and Mrs. Matheson, and Mr. Ernest Clark. The Duke visited the Robert Menzies School of Humanities, accompanied by Sir Robert Blackwood, and made an inspection of the language laboratories in the department of Modern Languages.

Members of staff joined Their Royal Highnesses for luncheon in the private dining-room in the Union building. The Royal Party departed at 2.15 for afternoon commitments.

The Duke inspects one of the language laboratories

