

MELROSE CHEMICAL LABORATORY.

Aid to Agricultural Research.

BUILDING OPENED BY THE GOVERNOR.

The ceremony of opening the Melrose Laboratory at the Waite Institute for Agricultural Research, Urrbrae, was performed by his Excellency the Governor (Sir Alexander Hore-Ruthven) on Monday afternoon. The Melrose Laboratory forms the south central wing of the laboratory buildings that have been designed for the accommodation of the research staff. The building now erected includes the central block, which holds the entrance hall and staircase, and a basement, which will eventually be extended as a special feature of the projected north central wing.

There was a very large attendance, and that in spite of the fact that the weather was not too favorable. A platform had been erected in front of the building and from it the speakers delivered their addresses. The Chancellor of the University (Sir George Murray) presided, and with him on the platform were his Excellency the Governor and the Hon. Lady Hore-Ruthven, Sir John and Miss Melrose, the Premier (Hon. R. L. Butler), the Commissioner of Crown Lands (Hon. J. Cowan), the Chairman of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (Sir George Julius), the Vice-Chancellor of the University (Sir William Mitchell), the Warden of the Senate (the Hon. Mr. Justice Angas Parsons) and members of the University Council:— Sir Langdon Bonython, Professor Chapman, Hon. W. H. Harvey, Messrs. T. E. Barr Smith, and W. J. Young (chairman of the finance committee), the Director and Waite Professor of Agriculture (Dr. A. E. V. Richardson) and the Lord Mayor (Mr. Lavington Bonython) and the Lady Mayoress.

The Chancellor, in calling on his Excellency to perform the ceremony, said the great gift of £10,000 made by Sir John Melrose in 1927 for the erection of a chemical laboratory at the Waite Institute had now been applied to its destined purpose, and the laboratory stood before them in the south wing of the building. The design of the building was the work of Mr. Laybourn Smith, and the erection that of Mr. S. C. Jarvis. The design was worthy of the architect and the workmanship a credit to the contractor. He referred to Sir John Melrose's gift as a great one, and had done so in no spirit of mere compliment. The gift was truly great in its conception, the object for which it was given, and the time at which it was offered. Swift, in "Gulliver's Travels," had made the statement that he who could make two ears of corn or two blades of grass grow where but one grew before deserved more of mankind than the whole race of politicians. (Laughter.) The reference to the politicians was not served in this case, as they had to thank politicians in England and in the Commonwealth and State Parliaments for financial assistance in a truly generous measure. Politicians, irrespective of party, were unanimous in support of agricultural research. The Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, founded by the Parliament of the Commonwealth, had been most liberal, and he was glad of the presence of the chairman of the council (Sir George Julius), and Professor Rivett, a member, as it gave him an opportunity of conveying to them in person the grateful thanks of the University for all the help and encouragement they had given them in the task they had undertaken. The aims of agricultural research now went far beyond those mentioned by Dean Swift. They included the prevention of stock and plant diseases, problems of animal nutrition, the relation of light, temperature and moisture to crop production and numerous other matters. These problems were not to be solved in a day or a year, but great advances had been made since the days of Arthur Young, the noted English agricultural writer, whose fame had spread throughout Europe to such an extent that in 1791 the King of Spain had sent him a present of a Merino ram. The value of the Merino ram to the English farmers might be doubted, but nobody could doubt the value of the services of Mr. Peter Waite and Sir John Melrose to the farmers of South Australia. The name of Sir John Melrose would be borne in remembrance, together with that of Mr. Peter Waite. (Applause.)

Science versus Nature.

His Excellency said the opening of the laboratory constituted a landmark in the history of scientific research in the State, and, in fact, throughout the Empire. The first thought that struck one on an occasion of that kind was the stroke of good fortune that had fallen to their lot in having as members of the community patriotic citizens whose one ambition was to be able to do something for the benefit of the State, and for the people whose welfare they had so much at heart. Mr. Peter Waite, and now Sir John Melrose, had searched their minds to discover in

what form their generosity could best further the progress and prosperity of South Australia. Both of these gentlemen had had wide experience of the country. They had taken an active and practical part in its development, had seen its progress and witnessed its setbacks at first hand. They had studied the causes of the one and closely investigated the reasons of the other. In due course both of these wise and patriotic men had arrived at the same conclusion, that although Nature had endowed the country with great resources, these resources were not being developed to the utmost limit of their capacity, and could be enhanced a hundredfold by bringing science to their aid in the constant conflict with Nature. (Applause.) Hence the magnificent institute, hence the valuable up-to-date laboratory, hence the interesting ceremony which he was privileged to perform. In an assembly of that kind it was unnecessary for him to enlarge on the value of scientific research in agriculture. Its importance was obvious, but one point occurred to him in that connection. Although an enormous amount of scientific research had been devoted to the prevention and alleviation of the diseases of the human body, to the conquest of the air, to probe the depths of the sea, to communicate with friends thousands of miles away, and so forth, comparatively little had been done to develop the productive capacity of the land, or the health and strength of the flocks or herds.

Increasing Food Demand.

The reason was, perhaps, not far to seek. In days gone by the supply of the fruits of the earth was sufficient to meet the demand. One had only to scatter seeds on the soil and leave nature to do the rest. One had only to place flocks and herds on the land and leave them to shift for themselves and in both cases results were sufficiently good for the people's needs. But not only had the population of the world increased, semi-civilised races had become more civilised and demanded more and better food and better clothing—and more of it. (Laughter.) More intensive cultivation and a greater production of stock became a necessity. The question of the food supply of the world was not one for the individual farmer alone; it was a great international problem, and must be treated on broad, comprehensive, and scientific lines. In Australia the problem was even more complicated. Land hunger was becoming more prevalent every day. The population of the British Empire, if it was to survive as a British Empire, must, as time went on, go through a gradual process of redistribution within her own boundaries. So, in the interests equally of the old country and the new, every means must be utilised to discover whether land hitherto found to be valueless could not be made productive.

There was every reason to believe that far-reaching results would accrue from the researches of the institute. Experience already was beginning to show what science could effect. It was not too much to say that the discovery of super phosphates alone had revolutionised farming in this country. One could not believe that this was the only discovery that would be made. Nobody suggested for a moment that the limit of investigations in this direction had been reached. It would be far nearer the mark to say that we were only on the threshold. With this splendid institution, equipped with the latest inventions the world could produce, and more important still, directed by a chief whose name was a household word in the sphere of agricultural science, assisted by a staff whose qualifications were of the very highest, it might safely be predicted that far-reaching developments would occur in the primary industries of this State. When the history of South Australia came to be written, the names of those patriotic gentlemen who endowed the institute, the names of those who had furthered its inception, the names of those who had labored within its walls would occupy a prominent place in the roll of the great benefactors of the State. (Applause.)

A Function of the State.

The Premier (Hon. R. L. Butler), in proposing a vote of thanks to Sir John Melrose, said Sir John never deceived anybody, and never allowed other people to deceive him. When he

made his generous gift he knew what he was doing. His one desire was to benefit South Australia, and he could not have done it in a more fitting manner. The investigations and experiments which would be carried on in the laboratory would benefit not only the primary producer, but provide the staff of life for the whole community. He quite realised that politicians would never get credit for having made two blades of grass grow where only one grew before. The lot of the politician was to find the cash and then be criticised for having been unduly extravagant. (Laughter.) The Government which he led could claim to have done something for agricultural research. He was bitterly opposed to Government subsidies, which built up artificial conditions, but it would always be the function of the State to educate the young men who would carry out the necessary research into improved methods of production. He hoped that before another year had passed they would be laying the foundation-stone of an agricultural high school, for which Mr. Peter Waite had provided. It was always a tonic to him to visit the institute, a cure for pessimism. (Laughter.) It made one realise that agriculture was at last coming into its own in South Australia, and would hold its own in the future. (Applause.)

The vote of thanks was carried by acclamation.

Less Opposition to Science.

Sir John Melrose, in responding, said he had always nourished a grudge against the Chancellor, because, in their young days, when he wanted the Chancellor to do anything he told him to do it; whereas Sir George, in similar circumstances, asked him if he would do it. He was, in short, too polite. He had lived that down in the course of time, but what he had said that afternoon had given him a whole lot more to live down. (Laughter.) Sir John related some of his early agricultural experiences, beginning at the age of 11, including a story of ploughing a paddock with a bullock team and a double-furrow plough. The man he had driving the bullocks could not drive them straight, and he himself could not drive them at all. That particular paddock was, he believed, called Snake Flat to the present day. (Laughter.) They did worse than that, however, in that they did not make one blade of wheat spring up where one tussock had grown before. (Laughter.) In those days there was great opposition to science among the farmers, but that had worn off. One had only to travel round the farms to see the difference in the system of agriculture now and even 20 years ago. Mr. Peter Waite realised that it was up to him to do something for the country that had done so much for him. He wished to impress on those present that there was plenty of room at the other end of the present buildings to put up more, and they would be wanted before long. They could not take their money with them, and he, personally, preferred to give his money to people while he was still alive, so that he might watch their folly. (Laughter.)

Partners in Research.

The chairman of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (Sir George Julius) said he appreciated the opportunity of being present at what would be reckoned in future as a function of vital importance to the welfare of the country. Australia at present was facing increasing difficulties, and it would be readily admitted that not by such artificial means as tariffs alone would the looked-for results be secured. The future of the country for many years must lie in primary produce, and no efforts must be spared to make every advance possible. His council believed that they had received more help from the University of Adelaide and the Waite Institute than they had been able to give. They were coming more and more to regard both these institutions as partners. As money was not over plentiful, and the necessary human material even scarcer, it was only by co-operation with universities and departments of Agriculture that they could hope to do a quarter of what needed to be done for primary production in Australia. (Applause.)

The Seeing Eye.

The Minister of Agriculture (Hon. J. Cowan), in proposing a vote of thanks to his Excellency, said since his arrival the Governor had identified himself with every phase of life. It was evident after his visits to the South-East, the River Murray, and many other districts, that he had the seeing eye and the observing mind. The Waite Institute, with the addition of the Melrose laboratory, would rank as one of the best-equipped institutions of its kind in the world, and as Minister of Agriculture he greatly appreciated the fact that the work of the institute had been made possible by the generosity of public-spirited persons, such as Mr. Peter Waite and Sir John Melrose. He recognised that certain economic and industrial problems of the present time were not mainly due to lack of natural opportunities and resources, but to developmental schemes. (Applause.)

The thanks were accorded with enthusiasm. Those present inspected the laboratory after the door had been formally unlocked by his Excellency.

Adv. 24-4-29

EVENING STUDENTSHIPS.

The Minister of Education (Hon. M. McIntosh) has approved of the award of evening studentships to the following:—Joyce Besley, Gilberte V. O. Hill, Joan Jackson, Stuart D. Lade, Amalia A. Martin, Gladys R. Pank, Alice Mr. S. Shaw, and Thos. D. Swanson, arts course; Norman F. Abbott, Jack L. Barter, Rex. B. Cant, Edna J. Errington, John H. Hughes, Russell D. King, and Harry and Mary Vincent, commerce; Robert W. Correll, Cedric E. Gregory, Raymond H. Harvey, Dudley O. Haslam, Thomas R. V. Lloyd, and Stanley E. Pederson, engineering; and Robert J. Clark, law. These studentships are offered annually by the Education Department for competition by persons attending, or proposing to attend, evening lectures at the University of Adelaide or the School of Mines with a view to graduating or securing a diploma. The total value of the awards in any one year does not exceed £180.

REG 24-4-29

Professor Studies Adelaide Fossils

Professor Sir Edgeworth David, who left yesterday afternoon for Sydney, has been here about three weeks, collecting fossils around Adelaide, and doing scientific work. At Teatree Gully he obtained many specimens which he said were probably large marine animals, and very likely big sand worms, of a geological age before the last. He was assisted by Messrs. C. T. Madigan, A. R. Alderman, and Professor Howchin. Professor David will study his finds in Sydney, and any of value or interest will be returned to Adelaide for the State Museum at the University.

Adv. 23-4-29

PRIMARY INDUSTRIES.

DEVELOPMENT CAMPAIGN.

APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEE.

DR. A. E. V. RICHARDSON AS CHAIRMAN.

Melbourne, April 22.

The Prime Minister (Mr. Bruce) today made further reference to the decision of the Commonwealth Government to launch a national campaign for more intensive primary development. The great objective, he said, was to develop Australia's resources and increase its national wealth. To facilitate increased development the Commonwealth had entered into the £34,000,000 agreement with Great Britain, and had appointed the Development and Migration Commission to supervise the expenditure, for the pur-



Dr. A. E. V. Richardson.

of ensuring that the moneys available would be spent on genuinely developmental schemes.