

## A MUNIFICENT GIFT.

MR. PETER WAITE'S  
GENEROSITY.

HOME FOR THE UNIVERSITY.

PROPERTY WORTH £50,000

AN AGRICULTURAL HIGH SCHOOL.

Before the business of the day, as set forth in the notice paper, was called on in the House of Assembly on Tuesday afternoon, the Premier (Hon. A. H. Peake) said he had an intimation to make to the House in which he was sure not only hon. members, but every citizen of the State would be vitally interested. He continued:—Hon. members will be gratified to learn that one of our citizens has decided to make a gift in the interests of agricultural education which can be truly described as munificent. The gift to the public is in two portions, one being to the Government, and the other to the University, but it should be viewed as one proposition. It is particularly gratifying to me, as it consummates one of the aims which my Government of 1909 included in its programme, and it, moreover, enables us to give effect to one of the recommendations of the Education Commission. Prior to the publication of the Commission's report, and without a knowledge of its intentions, the Commissioner of Crown Lands (Mr. Young) was in communication with Mr. Peter Waite, who desired to make the gift in question for the best possible purpose, and with the Commissioner he visited the Agricultural High



Mr. Peter Waite.

School at Ballarat, and was there confirmed in his desire to further agricultural education. He eventually made the two following offers, which were contained in two letters, the first of which was dated October 3 and addressed to myself. It read as follows:—

Letter to the Premier.

"Dear Mr. Peake—Following upon our conversation of 30th August last, I have now arranged to hand over to the University of Adelaide my 'Urrbrae' house and grounds, embracing an area of 134 acres, half of the land to be available for the University for agricultural and kindred studies, and the balance as a public park under their control. I enclose copy of letter which I am to-day sending to the Chancellor of the University. I now formally offer to the Government of South Australia part section 250, hundred of Adelaide, containing 114 acres for the purposes of an agricultural high school; this land adjoins 'Urrbrae.' In coming to the decision to make this offer I have been much influenced by the wonderful work our agriculturists and pastoralists

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have accomplished hitherto in face of the heavy odds they have had to meet. With comparatively little scientific training they have placed our wheat, wool, and fruits in the highest estimation of the world; our sheep have been brought to such perfection that they are sought after not only by all the sister States, but by South Africa; our agricultural machinery has been found good enough even for the Americans to copy, and our farming methods have been accepted by the other States as the most up to date and practical for Australian conditions. We have now reached a point when it behoves us to call science to our aid to a greater extent than hitherto has been done, otherwise we cannot hope to keep in the forefront. It seems to me that our manufactures must soon overtake the requirements of the Commonwealth, and that it is to the land we must look to occupy the coming generations. The only condition I wish to make in regard to the two gifts is that they are contingent only upon the Government undertaking that neither my estate nor the University shall be called upon to pay succession duties thereon. I would like to see the Agricultural High School under the control of a board which might be constituted as follows:—Two representatives selected by the Government, and one each by the Royal Agricultural and Horticultural Society, the University, and Elder's Trustee and Executor Company, Limited. This wish, however, is not put forward as a condition of the gift. Further, I hope that some arrangement will be made for those boys who distinguish themselves at the Agricultural School to be attracted to the higher work which will be done in the scientific schools of the University. The land for the Agricultural High School is, as you know, ready and available for the commencement of operations at any time should my offer of it be accepted.—Yours faithfully, Peter Waite."

Offer to the University.

The second letter was addressed to the Chancellor of the University (Sir Samuel Way), and read as follows:—"Dear Sir Samuel—It appears to me that we are approaching a point in the history of the State and the Commonwealth when our manufactures will more than keep pace with the local demand. Our population will, however, continue to increase I hope more and more quickly, and the natural outlet for the energies of our rising generation appears to me to be in producing wealth from the land. Our State has hitherto done notably in all branches of agriculture and the allied arts, and, largely, without scientific direction and education. In the future competition threatens to be so keen that we must equip our people in the best possible manner. In the belief that such sections of the University work as agriculture, botany, entomology, horticulture, and forestry can be better dealt with upon such a property as 'Urrbrae' than at North-terrace, I now desire to offer as a gift to the University the 'Urrbrae' estate of 134 acres, for the following purposes, viz.:—1. The eastern portion, say 67 acres or thereabouts, with the buildings thereon, to be used for the purposes above outlined, interpreting them in their widest sense. 2. The remainder, say 67 acres or thereabouts, to be a public park under the control of the University, but if it be thought advisable I would be quite willing that 10 or 15 acres, or such area as might be found necessary, should be used as a students' sports ground. When the University authorities have considered this matter I will be pleased to know their decision, and if my offer is accepted the title can be at once transferred to the University, subject to the life tenancy of my wife and myself and of the survivor of us. I am making it a condition with the Government that the University shall not be liable for any succession duty when the property falls into your possession.—Yours faithfully, Peter Waite."

The Generous Donor Thanked.

The Treasurer went on to say he was pleased to be able to announce that the council of the University unanimously accepted the magnificent offer made to that institution, and expressed their view that Mr. Waite's actions were highly patriotic and far-seeing. The Government regarded the offer as equally important and readily accepted it, in acknowledging their indebtedness to Mr. Waite they had the pleasure of knowing that all the members of his family were in full accord with his action. Mr. Waite was a gentleman who, by a life's work had done a great deal, chiefly in association with the late Sir Thomas Elder, in developing the important pastoral interests of the State in the interior, and no name was better known in that connection. It was gratifying to find that Mr. Waite was so deeply interested in the further development of the producing interests and in the promotion of scientific education. The fact that the University Agricultural School and the Agricultural High School would be situated side by side, should conduce to the success of, and to economy in working both institutions. The proposed Fullarton tramway would extend to both properties, which were within four miles of the G.P.O., and make them readily accessible. He was sure hon. members would appreciate the great value of that munificent gift. The land altogether comprised close upon 250 acres, and being within four miles of the capital was of itself a very fine gift. Not only was the land of great value, but there was a fine mansion on the property. It was a joint gift to the State and to the University—part to the State, and part to the University, and it would enable the Government to carry out without delay one of the recommendations of the Education Commission, which was that there should be an Agricultural High School established near the city, so that city boys might have a chance of learning at least the elements of farming, and possibly a good deal more. Further, it would have a tendency to draw away a great number of boys from the city to become farmers and landholders by-and-by. He did not like to place a value on the gift, but it was possibly £40,000 or £50,000 at least. Mr. Waite was one of those gentlemen of whom the State was proud, because they had given of their wealth in

order to benefit their fellows and the State generally.

Mr. Denny said it was difficult to express adequately their appreciation of the valuable gift. He noticed from the correspondence that it was subject to a life interest for Mr. Waite and his wife. Were they to understand that, notwithstanding this condition, the property was to be immediately available?

The Treasurer said the hon. member was quite right regarding the condition. Mr. Waite was advanced in years and Mrs. Waite was not young, but he was sure they would all join in wishing that Mr. and Mrs. Waite would long be spared. The part donated for an agricultural high school would be available at once.

Few men are so well known in pastoral circles as Mr. Peter Waite, who has been connected with the industry throughout his life in South Australia. Mr. Waite was not born and bred "on the land," for he spent the first nine years of his life after leaving school in the ironmongery business. He was born in 1834 in the town of Kirkcaldy, Fifeshire, Scotland, and at the close of his school-going period he was apprenticed to the ironmongery business, and he followed the calling or that of general ironworker in Edinburgh and Aberdeen for nine years. When he reached the age of 25 years he resolved to come to South Australia, and he landed in Melbourne en route, in 1850, having come out in the sailing ship *The British Trident*. Soon after his arrival in South Australia he proceeded to Pandappa, a station east of Terowie, where his brother was engaged in sheepfarming, and it was there that he received his training in matters relating to the pastoral industry. Some years later he joined the late Sir Thomas Elder in the purchase of the Paratoo Run, which adjoined Pandappa, and through which the Broken Hill railway passes. The two runs were then