

Mr. Peter Waite's death.

pastoral industry fences were unknown, and Mr. Waite soon realised the value of fenced land as against open, and in 1868 he commenced fencing his runs, and during 1870 and 1871 the great quantity of 285 tons of wire—which was imported from England—was placed round them. In 1873 Mr. Waite assumed charge of Belkara, Umberlana, and Murnpeowie stations, on which very little had been done in the way of improvements. Between the time he assumed charge and 1898, no less a sum than £214,000 was expended in fencing and providing water. Since that year many additional improvements in the shape of subdivisions, weirs, and dam sinking were made, and on all the properties with which Mr. Waite was connected similar improvements were carried out. The extent to which Mutooroo, Lilydale, Lake Charles, Malyungarie, Mount Lyndhurst, and Murnpeowie stations were improved up to 1913 may be gauged from the fact that over 1,000 miles of vermin-proof fencing were erected, all the stations being completely encompassed by that class of fence. The value of the fencing operations and other improvements is demonstrated by the fact that the number of sheep on Fararoo rose from a small number to 300,000 in 1874, which was before the advent of the rabbit, while the Belkara properties at one period carried over 300,000 sheep. Drought and the rabbit subsequently wrought havoc on those as on all other properties. Mr. Waite found the camel and the donkey wonderful utility animals for carrying and station purposes. They were introduced in the north by the late Sir Thomas Elder, and from those herds, which were increased by Mr. Waite, the first animals were sent to Western Australia. His aim was never to deplete a station by overstocking it and eating the heart out of it, but to keep it always in good condition. In the breeding of utility sheep Mr. Waite set a wonderful example, and those who have followed it have profited immensely.

Love of Home Life.

The deceased gentleman was the essence of modesty, and only on rare occasions could be induced to talk about his own experiences or career. He preferred action to talk at all times. Simplicity marked his home life, and he was very fond of flowers, as was shown by the beautiful gardens which surrounded Urrbrae, his lovely home at Mitcham. Originally Urrbrae was owned by the late Mr. McGeorge, who was drowned in 1839. Some years prior to that event it was leased by the late Mr. Edward Stirling, thus being the boyhood home of the late Professor Stirling and Sir Lancelot Stirling. Mr. Waite purchased Urrbrae in 1874, and built the present home in 1890-91. In 1894 he married a daughter of the late Mr. James Methuen, of Leith, Scotland, who survives him. He also leaves one son—Mr. James Waite, metallurgical engineer, of London—and three daughters—Mrs. James Macmillan, of Melbourne, and Misses Eva and Lily Waite, of Adelaide. For distinguished war service Mr. James Waite was awarded the M.B.E., and Miss Eva Waite was also awarded the O.B.E. for Red Cross work in Adelaide during the war.

Princely Munificence.

It is by his princely munificence that Mr. Waite will be longest remembered, however. He showed his gratitude to the country in which he made his great wealth by lavish gifts to its public and charitable institutions, and many of these were never made public. No one in need ever appealed to him in vain. The Adelaide University will ever have cause to remember his name. In 1913 he made a gift of his magnificent Urrbrae estate to that institution. The letter from Mr. Waite to the then Chancellor of the University (Sir Samuel Way) was characteristic of the man. "Dear Sir Samuel" (he wrote)—"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 elsewhere is 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 consider 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."

Needless to say, the offer was gratefully accepted. In the terms of the offer Mrs. Waite will enjoy a life tenancy of Urrbrae. At the same time Mr. Waite wrote to the Premier, the late Hon. A. H. Peake, stating that he had made the offer of Urrbrae to the University, and adding:—"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 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 behooves 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 High 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."

Unfortunately, owing to lack of funds, the Government have been unable to carry out the high ideals embodied in the letter. By a strange coincidence, however, his Excellency the Governor (Sir Archibald Weigall), in the course of an address on agricultural education, delivered at the congregation of the Adelaide University on Tuesday, stated, on the authority and at the wish of the Government, that it was their intention to place a sum on the next Estimates for the establishment of an agricultural day school on the land presented by Mr. Waite. Thus, in some measure at least, his ideal will be carried into effect. To further assist the University in establishing an agricultural department, Mr. Waite, in August, 1918, transferred the equivalent to 5,880 shares in Elder, Smith & Co., Ltd., to the institution, to be held in trust. During Mr. Waite's lifetime the income from the shares was paid to him, and it will now, in accordance with the conditions of the gift, be handed to the University for use in connection with the Urrbrae scheme. In round figures the gift represented £20,000. In 1915 Mr. Waite purchased 112 acres of the Netherby estate, and the Claremont estate, of 53 acres, which adjoin Urrbrae, and transferred them to the University also. There is thus constituted a magnificent endowment of 220 acres of excellent land of varied character with a good rainfall, close to the city, and with many substantial buildings upon it. The total value of the endowments exceeds £100,000, and the value to the agricultural industries of the State in years to come of the splendid gift will be impossible to estimate. Mr. Waite was no visionary, but he had a wide vision of the future and its wonderful possibilities. His main object was to build for that future, and not to be content to rest on past achievements. Many names of noble pioneers occur to the mind, those of Sir Thomas

Elder and Mr. John Howard Angus among them, but the name of Peter Waite will be placed alongside them when, from the perspective of time the history of the State is written. Then, when a man is remembered only by the good he did and the benefactions he wrought, the name of Mr. Peter Waite will occupy a high niche. Charitable institutions will mourn his loss. He was particularly generous to the Salvation Army. In 1913 he made a donation to Messrs. Elder, Smith & Co. of £10,000 for the purpose of establishing a provident fund in connection with the company. That was but one instance of his magnanimity. Of him it can be truly written, "Here was a man."

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MENTAL DEFICIENCY.

GRADUATES' ASSOCIATION DISCUSSION.

The members of the Adelaide University Graduates' Association held their opening meeting for the year on Tuesday evening in the new Darling Building at the University, and the subject of discussion was, "The problem of mental deficiency and its neglect in South Australia." Professor Brailsford Robertson presided over a large attendance.

The discussion was initiated by Dr. Helen Mayo, who, after having briefly outlined the causes and types of feeble-mindedness, said that in a great many cases there was a good chance, with proper medical attention and care, to cure, or greatly ameliorate, the condition of those who otherwise would become hopeless imbeciles. The problem had to be attacked at an early stage in the life of the patient, the earlier the better. There should be skilled doctors and psychologists, selected for the classification by examination of the physical and mental states of the children, not only those of school age, but also those of very tender years. There should be a psychologist attached to the Children's Court in order to help to elucidate the many problems that came before that tribunal. Those children found to be abnormal should receive special teaching on certain lines. There should be established institutions for educating them, when they could be segregated, and when they could be employed after having received as much education as they were fitted for. The incurables should be kept apart, and not allowed to mix with those who could be treated with at all events partial success. No education could do the latter any good, and all that could be achieved was to care for them and keep them from harm. In detailing some of the causes responsible for feeble-mindedness, the doctor said that they included heredity, prenatal, natal, and post-natal, and the effects were brought about, among other things, by the physical conditions of the body, defective sight and hearing, and state of the general health, physical retardation, adverse environment, unhappy homes, and improper family care. It had often been found that there was definite mental retardation in children who had drunken fathers.

Dr. Rogers and Mr. F. G. Hollidge also spoke to the question, and the latter, in referring to the work at Minda, said it had been found necessary that there should be a second home established there in which the hopelessly incurable children could be segregated. The new buildings needed, if the problem were to be effectively dealt with in that Home, would cost at least £10,000.

Dr. Fry referred to the methods of classification, and said that, while it was by no means a certain test, presumptive evidence could be obtained by measurement, and if the results were decidedly below the average there was evidence of the child being abnormal. No series of rigid rules of classification and tests could be accepted as infallible. It was agreed, however, that those classed as idiots could never become better; those classed as imbeciles might possibly be trained in very simple duties, and those classed as feeble-minded could, with careful training, be taught to be of service to themselves and of value to the State.

Dr. F. S. Hone said that with mental defectives the mistake appeared still to be made of considering that they were not educated unless their minds were trained along the lines of reading and writing, whereas any faculty that might be drawn out of those people, and used, was education in the highest sense of the word. It was necessary that there should be a correlation of activities in respect to the problem, and that the waste of energy and money now going on should be prevented. The economic aspect had not been sufficiently emphasized. Something in the nature of a farm colony should be established. The first necessity, however, was to have at the University a trained psychologist to hold clinics and examine and grade children, and who would also train students who would subsequently be able to

carry on the work and standardise the results. Feeble-mindedness was not caused by heredity alone, but also by environment, and the latter danger could be minimized to a very great extent by attacking syphilis, alcoholism, and poisoning by other means, by improving the medical instruction of students, and by removing the defective conditions which brought about infantile diseases, which could be done in the direction of reducing mental deficiency.

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UNIVERSITY DEGREES CONFERRED.

At a special congregation of the University of Adelaide on Thursday degrees were conferred ad eundem gradum, on a number of candidates by the Chancellor (Sir George Murray). Professor J. R. Wilton presented for the degree of Master of Arts, Dr. Archibald T. Strong, M.A. (Liverpool), who has recently taken up professional duties at the University of Adelaide. Colonel W. T. Hayward presented Dr. J. P. O'Brien, M.B., B.S. (Melbourne), for the degrees of Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery. Professor T. Brailsford Robertson presented Messrs. S. W. Pennycook, B.Sc. (Queensland), and O. W. Tiesz, B.Sc. (Queensland), for the degree of Bachelor of Science. There were also a number of candidates for admission to ordinary degrees. Professor Coleman Phillipson presented Messrs. C. R. Hannan, and L. M. B. Hogan for the degree of Bachelor of Law; Professor J. R. Wilton presented Mr. Irwin Topperwein for the ordinary degree of Bachelor of Arts; Professor Robertson presented Mr. F. R. Potts for the degree of Bachelor of Science; and Mr. J. Dalby, B.Sc., presented Messrs. T. E. Cooper, A. N. Dawkins, R. W. Ford, S. H. M. Gillman, and W. Schneider for the Degree of Bachelor of Engineering and the Diploma in Applied Sciences. The candidates were admitted and congratulated by the Chancellor.

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DEATH OF MR. PETER WAITE.

TRIBUTE FROM THE GOVERNMENT.

The Minister of Agriculture (Hon. T. Pascoe), referring on behalf of the Government to the death of Mr. Waite, said on Wednesday:—"We very deeply deplore his demise. He was a type of pioneer of the State whom we are fast losing—a man who was not afraid to go out into the country and to take risks which other men of different traits of character would not have the enterprise nor the courage to enter upon. The solution of the problems of the pastoral country as seen to-day compared with the position 40 or 50 years ago is largely due to the efforts and enterprise of men such as Mr. Waite. The Government are indeed grateful—and so is the State generally—to him for his generous gift of the land at Urrbrae for the Agricultural High School. The following little story will serve to demonstrate the disposition of the man himself. It was related to me on a train journey which we were both making some years ago. Mr. Waite desired that Mr. Andrew Smith should take over the management of one of his stations. They made an inspection of the place. Mr. Smith (who is the father of Sir Ross Smith and Sir Keith Smith) remarked that he thought the job was too big for him. Mr. Waite said he did not think so. He added, "You will make mistakes and I will have to pay for them, but if mistakes are not made you will be no good to me." The position was accepted. Later, when the pair were inspecting the property, Mr. Waite reminded Mr. Smith of his remarks about the making of mistakes, and pointed out one that had been made. Then he added that although the error of judgment had occurred it had been more than paid for by an undertaking which had had to be effected, owing to the mistake having been made. Mr. Waite was not afraid to launch out. He did a lot of experimental work, and while he lost heavily on some of it, others benefited by his experience. It is impossible for me adequately to express the sense of loss which I feel in connection with his death, so far as the State is concerned. I am very glad to be able to say that he was advised that the Government had decided to establish the agricultural high school on the land presented by him, although the decision was not arrived at until a short while before he passed away."