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### IRRIGATION AND AGRICULTURE.

#### An Adelaidean's Impressions.

#### Studies in Other Countries.

Mr. Eric S. West, B.Sc., M.Sc., a son of a former Chief Inspector of Schools in South Australia (the late Mr. E. S. West), who had spent two years abroad, enlarging his knowledge of irrigation and agriculture, arrived home by the Commonwealth liner Jervis Bay on Wednesday.

When a student at the Roseworthy Agricultural College in 1916, Mr. West enlisted. He was wounded in April, 1917, and was invalided home. Resuming his professional studies, he obtained the B.Sc. degree at the Adelaide University, and was awarded the Lowrie Scholarship, which enabled him to go abroad to continue his research. He proceeded to Cali-



MR. ERIC S. WEST, B.Sc., M.Sc.

fornia, where, after a year, he took the M.Sc. degree. Subsequently he spent three months, in company with a fellow-student (from Western Australia), in visiting the most important irrigation and agricultural institutions and centres in the United States.

#### Gleanings from America.

Mr. West said yesterday afternoon that he had made exhaustive studies in the countries which he had visited. Regarding irrigation, two of the greatest dangers were the rising of the water table and the accumulation of salts, which, more or less, went hand in hand. Great care was necessary to avoid them. In California thousands of acres of land had been laid waste through that cause. He had studied closely the matter of soil chemistry and bacteriology. In his trip across the States he had gone through the arid, the irrigation, the corn, and the wheat belts. Bulk handling of wheat was, of course, popular in America. It was the most up-to-date way of handling the grain. Naturally, the financial aspect was a big factor in the introduction of the system. Maize was the chief crop in America, and the rotation to get the best results was corn, corn again, oats, and clover. All the manure possible was given to the Indian corn, which was used chiefly for feeding purposes. Much practical work was being done there in wheat breeding. A problem in which the Americans were particularly interested—and which concerned South Australia also—was that of producing rust-resistant wheats of good quality. What Australia had done in that matter—especially the Central State—ranked high in comparison with the attainments of other countries. Farming and the handling of farm produce were carried out on a big scale in America, said Mr. West. He had been impressed by the immense amount of money which was being spent on agriculture and agricultural research,

and by the size of the agricultural colleges. The States kept in touch with the farmers. Besides farm advisers, there were home demonstrators. Just as the advisers helped the farmers, so did the demonstrators help country housewives to make the homes attractive. The people were radio mad. Messages were broadcast daily by wireless giving the market prices and the prospects of the weather. There were two kinds of holdings—small ones comparable to those in South Australia, and big ones run by companies (some by English money), and employing many hands. The dairy cattle were, generally speaking, rather superior to those in this State. The Friesians were favoured for dairying and the Herefords for beef. Herd testing societies were much in evidence. There was considerable co-operation in securing bulls for stud purposes.

#### Plant Breeding.

In England Mr. West devoted much attention to the subject of plant breeding and seed testing. He studied at Cambridge, among other places. He visited Rothamstead, which, he said, was probably the most famous experimental station in the world. At Aberystwith (Wales) he had the pleasure of seeing a fine plant-breeding station. He also visited farms in Scotland and made general observations. He then crossed over to Denmark. Agriculture and dairying were the principal industries there, he said, and had attained to a higher standard than anywhere else. The principal cattle were Danish Reds and Friesians. There were no "mongrels." Everything was done in a scientific way. Co-operation was greatly in evidence. Although the people had taken the initiative in that direction, the Government had rendered material assistance. There were splendid plant breeding and plant testing stations, and the plant testing work was probably performed more thoroughly in Denmark than in any other part of the world. Cambridge had established a seed-testing station, and had taken the one at Copenhagen as a pattern. The most celebrated plant-breeding station of the lot, however, was that at Svalof (Sweden), which he had also inspected. Thence he went to Germany and back to England.

#### South Australia's Position.

Mr. West, in conclusion, remarked that the practices in irrigation in America were similar to those in South Australia. The Americans had a great advantage in that they had a big market in the East. He thought that the marketing problem for the Commonwealth could be overcome. He had seen nothing better than our apricots and peaches. In oranges, however, the best local product was rather too big for the export market. The Californian oranges were smaller. A disadvantage in relation to our dried fruit crop was that it reached England when it was too old to command full favour.

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#### Going to "Bart's" Anniversary.

South Australia is sending a distinguished representative to the 800th anniversary of St. Bartholomew's Hospital, London, in Sir Joseph Verco. It was at that institution that he gained high honours in the seventies, and the authorities at "Bart's" in those far-off days were surprised that the brilliant young M.D. should have decided to return to his native city. The outlook for him was rosy with great promise. Sir Joseph had taken the highest degree at the London University two years before an ordinary student was allowed to sit for it. The reason was that his outstanding ability had given him the right to be examined, and he came through triumphantly.

At the age of 27 Sir Joseph came away from London with enough degrees to trail a fair portion of the alphabet after his name—M.D., M.B., M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P., B.S., and F.R.C.S. Then in 1919, His Majesty attached the Royal imprimatur—Kt. Now that Sir Joseph is in his 72nd year he is scarcely anxious for further additions, although there is no knowing what "Bart's" may want to do to him when the former student and house surgeon gets back to the old spot. The remarkable thing is that Sir Joseph was never intended for medicine, and it was not until he was 17 that he embarked upon a career which was to carry him to such eminence that to-day he is regarded as one of the greatest authorities in diagnosis in Australia.

It is amusing, in retrospect, to read the testimonials given to him by three of the leading physicians of St. Bartholomew's

Hospital in 1877. One recommends him highly for either public or private practice; another refers to him as "one of our most distinguished students," and the third, replying to the request for a testimonial, says, "I can hardly give you a better one than to refer to the honours and distinctions you have already obtained." With the heavy demand, still made upon Sir Joseph's advice, he has found time to be a great conchologist, and a sincere and industrious church worker.

### EXAMINATION "HOWLERS."

#### Why Wine Tastes Bitter!

#### Amusing Inaccuracies Discussed.

Notes by the examiners on the work of the candidates at the public examinations always make interesting reading. Among the children who aspire to attain as many marks as possible, there are found a few who, from over-eagerness to answer questions which they know very little about, join the ranks of those who contribute to the list of "howlers." Some exceedingly funny notes are included in the manual of the Public Examinations Board for 1923, which has been issued by the Registrar of the University of Adelaide. The examiner, in his notes on the English tests, says that "the commonest error was the misuse of 'laying' and 'laid,' these forms being used for 'lying' and 'lain.'" This occurred in an incredible number of senior and junior answers. Apparently, the mistake is in the atmosphere, but Byron has a great deal to answer for with his "There let him lay." Other very common errors were the repeated 'that,' and errors of the type of 'whom we think is coming.' The examiner added that if good spelling was desirable, and faulty spelling a reproach alike to pupil and to teacher, it was plain that a determined effort should be made to raise the standard of spelling among the candidates of to-day. "I am assured," he said, "that most mistakes are caused, not by ignorance, but by carelessness; words printed in the questions are frequently misspelt, or a word is spelt in two different ways in the same sentence. The only remedy is to make the consequence of transgression unpleasant. As far as full stops are concerned, there has been a great improvement in late years, but many still find a difficulty with the comma."

#### Amusing Mistakes.

"Earth's pleasures are theatres and amusements," wrote one candidate in a Junior English paper. In Higher Public history the examiner said the results were disappointing, compared with those of last year, but perhaps the increase in numbers was partly responsible for this falling-off. The officer who had charge of the section in Junior history found that "While the map of England could usually be identified, the sketch maps of the locality of the Crimea were amazing. A child who locates the Crimea in Spain cannot write intelligently about the war." A question on topics relating to the Puritans was on the whole fairly well answered. The arrest of the five members, however, was not well understood, and was frequently confused with the dissolution of 1629. Charles's reasons in attacking, and those of the Parliament in defending, the five members were nearly always either misstated or ignored altogether. The phrase 'the birds have flown,' was quoted hundreds of times, and the rendering, 'the members flew to London' was very common. A question on free trade and protection, added the examiner, "was fairly well answered. The work of Joseph Chamberlain, however, was frequently described instead of Peel's; and colonial preference and military protection were offered as explanations of the terms. The connection of the four statesmen with the free trade movement was very well known; but there were many careless statements, such as 'Cobden and Bright wanted free trade to make things cheaper for the British farmer.' Scant justice was done to Disraeli, and the usual blunders were made about Peel's policemen providing the protection that the Free-traders desired to have. Very few could write intelligently about the rise of Methodism. Nearly every religious movement in English history was used in explaining it; and one candidate, after describing the Tudor persecutions, added that "the rise of Methodism was gradual but very trying."

#### Queer Answers About Jute.

In Senior Modern History, said the examiner in that section, common errors were "prior to the sixteenth century all Europe owed obedience to the Pope and the Emperor." "Wolsey became Archbishop of Canterbury." "Wolsey negotiated a marriage between Margaret and Henry IV." and "Edward VI, imposed a prayer book on Scotland." In relation to Junior Geography, it was said that the results as a whole were not good. The spelling of proper names required much supervision, and it was evident that far too many candidates depended on hearing and not on writing. The answers dealing with jute were very good, but the mental picture at the back of the following remained a mystery. "A jute is a roaming beast that lives in the Alps. It lives on grass, birds, and leaves. These beasts are a menace

side of the Alps. They eat the main stem of the vine, and many half-ripe bunches fall off. This is why wine tastes bitter." Another candidate said that "Paper is chiefly manufactured from rags in all the (Australian) capitals; two of Adelaide's leading manufacturers being — and —." Much misconception, went on the examiner, was shown about the iron supplies of Australia. Far too many candidates sent the Iron Knob ore to Port Pirie to be smelted, and a shockingly misguided patriotism compelled a candidate after candidate to speak of the Iron Knob supply as the largest in the world. Many candidates, remarked the examiner in Junior Latin, had a strange misunderstanding of the use of the relative pronoun in English. Such anomalies as these were common, "the rest of whom he perceived were faithful, he led with him," "Those whom he perceived were faithful," and again, "The young man who he put in command."

#### "Wrote Like Foreigners."

It was stated, concerning Junior French, that although the work of candidates had improved somewhat in prose composition, deplorable inaccuracies and carelessness were still shown in the elements of French grammar. The papers on Junior Commercial Business Correspondence and Precise writing, as a whole, displayed the candidates' great weakness in the command of English. Many wrote like foreigners, using stilted and well-worn commercial phrases. The following were examples of words used in the wrong sense, "A debtor who was in arrears with his payments hoped to repudiate his debt in a month," and "A country storekeeper asked to have his goods sent by a circuitous route."

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The name of Professor W. Mitchell, M.A., D.Sc., Vice-Chancellor and Hughes Professor of Philosophy at the Adelaide University, has lately been connected with

the appointment of Gifford Lecturer for 1923-4 at the Edinburgh University. The Gifford Lectures, established in 1889, were endowed by the late Mr. Adam Gifford, Senator of the College of Justice of the Edinburgh University, for promoting, teaching, and diffusing the study of natural theology, in the widest sense of that term. According to the Trust Deed, "the lecturers appointed shall be subjected to no test of any kind, and shall not be required to take any oath, or to emit or subscribe any declaration of be-



PROFESSOR W. MITCHELL, M.A., D.Sc.

lief, or to make any promise of any kind. They may be of any denomination whatever, or of no denomination at all; they may be of any religion or way of thinking, or, as is sometimes said, they may be of no religion; or they may be so-called sceptics or agnostics or free-thinkers—provided only that the patrons will use diligence to secure that they may be able, reverent men, true thinkers, sincere lovers of, and earnest enquirers after, truth. The lecturers shall be under no restraint whatever in their treatment of their theme. The lectures should be public and popular, open not only to the students of the universities, but to the whole community, without matriculation." Should Professor Mitchell accept the invitation which it is stated has been extended to him, he will be the first Gifford Lecturer from South Australia. It is known that he is contemplating a visit to England this year. It is understood that acceptance of the lectureship would not necessarily mean severing his connection with the Adelaide University, as he could deliver the course of lectures before he returned to Australia.