

FARMERS' WINTER SCHOOL

Fourth Fixture Opened.

Nearly 50 farmers—nominees from the various Agricultural Bureaus throughout the State—were present at the opening of the annual winter school at Roseworthy Agricultural College on Tuesday morning. The majority of the "scholars" were young men, who will remain at the institution for a fortnight, and undertake an interesting course of lectures by departmental and other experts. The college students are at present on vacation, and the visitors should glean much useful information in respect to proper farm management.

inter alia (1)

Government Sympathy.

The present Government was a Labour Government, Mr. Butterfield continued, but nevertheless they were absolutely in sympathy with the education of the farmer, and educational projects all round. Those who supported the Labour Party realized more than any other section of the community the disadvantages accruing from lack of education. He, himself, had been born in Victoria, of people who had been on the land in poor circumstances, and he had to go to work for a dairyman before he was 11. His first employment began on Christmas Eve—when other boys were going for their holidays. He worked in the country all his lifetime. He ceased school when he was 11, and he, therefore, should be in a position with the varied life that he had had, to realize that an inadequate education was a great drawback to anybody. For those reasons he referred to the privileges and opportunities the present generation enjoyed, as compared with those available when he had been a boy. The present Government would do its utmost to advance the educational systems of this State in every possible direction, limited only by the amount of money available. An intelligent, educated man was the most valuable asset a community could have. He was pleased to learn that the University had, in the interests of farmers, made progress with the Waite Research Institute, and had secured the services of Dr. A. E. V. Richardson, a former graduate of Roseworthy College. (Applause). Any Government in power in South Australia must necessarily take an interest in the rural pursuits of this State, because, after all, we had to meet our liabilities through our two great products—wool and wheat. We had no big mines or secondary industries, and we must, therefore, make ends meet from primary production. The Premier (Hon. J. Gunn) had been visiting the eastern States in an endeavour to get financial backing for a voluntary pool from the Federal Government.

inter alia (2)

Important Suggestions.

Mr. Colebatch welcomed the presence of the Minister, and added that the difficulty in the past has been to get sufficient visits from Ministers. Personally he would be glad to see a little more personal interest shown in the proceedings at Roseworthy College. The winter school was one of the ventures which had prospered since its introduction at the instigation of Mr. W. S. Kelly. The college felt that it was able to reach beyond the scope it had covered in previous times. The difficulty they had in drawing up a curriculum was similar to that experienced in connection with the annual Agricultural Congress in Adelaide. He had gone carefully into the question of holding winter schools, and had obtained particulars from America on the subject. The Americans adopted the practice of taking one particular section a week—say dairying for three or four days, and then fruitgrowing and wheat farming for similar periods. Perhaps that might be a good thing, but where we brought our students from all classes of country, rainfall, and soil conditions it was impossible to formulate a curriculum on these lines in the short period of a fortnight. Roseworthy College was exceedingly proud of the fact that Dr. A. E. V. Richardson had been appointed Director and Professor of Agriculture at the Waite Research Institute. They looked forward to see the foundations of that institute well and truly laid, and hoped they would be able to pass through the college men so well equipped and trained that they would be able to take positions on the staff of the institute. It was highly desirable that an effort should be made to place animal husbandry right in the forefront of the programme of the institute. There was no more pressing necessity than further investigation into the diseases of live stock, particularly sheep, in which subject they were deficient. They relied largely upon sheep in this State. In the insidiously increasing diseases were becoming more apparent as

the numbers of sheep increased and holdings were being worked more intensely, and diseases would arise which did not exist under more open conditions. In regard to forestry there should be more shelter belts in the agricultural areas extending to the Burra and beyond. The work could be done if they could impress upon students passing through the college the value of these shelter belts.

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PUBLIC SERVICE NOTES.

EDUCATION OF THE CIVIL SERVANT.

By "A Member."

The subject of education demands attention within the Public Service no less than in other spheres of business activity. The first requisite for efficiency is adequate education. Like the rope's end in the navy, the old idea of throwing a lad into the hurly-burly of business and leaving him to battle against the tide of circumstances as best he may, aided only by such native shrewdness and faculty of adaptability he may possess, has gone by the board. The machinery of business administration has grown too complex and valuable to allow un instructed 'prentice hands to experiment with its working. It is not sufficient that a lad be "good enough for an office boy" if he desires to evolve beyond that stage. That is certainly not a foundation upon which an efficient Public Service may be built. The work of evolution must begin before the office is reached. The training of the mind along the accepted lines of sound general education appears to give the necessary understanding, elasticity, and resourcefulness upon which initiative and wide outlook depend. Nothing, of course, can supply inherent deficiencies, but mental mobility and intelligent consideration of problems are largely products of training.

The more thoughtful Civil Servants have long realised that the standard set for entrance to the service is far too low, and from time to time committees have been appointed to make suggestions for general improvement. Representatives of the Public Service Association have conferred with the University authorities, who are anxious to further all legitimate schemes for educational betterment, and the Public Service Commissioner has been given a seat upon the Board of Commercial Studies. The main difficulty in the way of raising the cultural level of cadets is as ever the question of finance. It is found that when a lad has qualified beyond the level required he inevitably finds that greater rewards await him outside the service. Governments of the day have so far refused to enhance the inducements of candidates to enter the service, or to provide adequate rewards for later development. Naturally, young men take their requirements to the best market offering, and at present commerce, because it is prepared to pay a fair price for efficient service, obtains the richer harvest of qualification and ambition. Unless the State is prepared to do the same thing, it must remain condemned to accept a lower grade of officer. Such a policy is surely not in the best interests of the community.

Capacity and Tact.

A recent report on the British Civil Service pointed out that theoretically it is held that education in its fullest sense can inculcate the capacity for assuming responsibility, for acting individually, and for exercising the tact necessary in administrative work. This is the conclusion to which the Royal Commission of 1914 also came, and has indeed been the guiding principle of the Civil Service Commissioners of the old country since 1890. "The best brains of the nation" is what the Commissioners have always aimed at securing, and the decision of the Treasury to give persons who entered the service's administrative division a reasonable scale of pay with a wide gap between minimum and maximum fitted well into the scheme of things, and made it possible for such young men to be engaged in work of semi-apprentice nature in the early years of their service. By this means, we are assured, the State secured a body of well-educated young men whose mental abilities they proceeded to adapt to specialised conditions. But the inducements to enter the service are there, made adequate and the possibilities of advancement are known and reasonably secured to the aspirant. The important qualification of education was stressed by the Royal Commissioners. "We believe," they said, "that for men who are later to be engaged in administrative work a four to six years' course of the highest education between the ages of eighteen and twenty-two and over, con-

stitutes a much better preparation than four to six years spent in junior clerical work, and that, therefore, the initial salary given to those who enter by the Class I examination should be high enough to encourage them to take that course instead of entering the service at the earlier age.

Help for Young Officers.

Though it would not be possible (except in the professional division) to follow out that recommendation here, it is possible to devise a scheme for allowing young officers to attend a special course of study at the University with a view to filling eventually the better positions. The doors of the University are wide open for all who care to enter. Its authorities are known to be sympathetic with the needs and aspirations of the service in this matter, and it only remains for a workable scheme to be devised to raise the standard of educational achievement. But the Government must be prepared to recognise the fact that education and efficiency can not be separated.

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ARID AREAS.

CHARACTERISTIC VEGETATION.

The final of the course of three lectures on South Australian plants in their native haunts, by Professor T. G. B. Osborn, in connection with this year's syllabus of the Adelaide University Extension lectures was delivered at the University last evening.

The saltbush and arid Australian districts from Ooldea to the edge of Nullarbor Plain were described by the lecturer, who spoke from personal experience, having visited the localities mentioned, in addition to a number of sheep stations ranging from the Murray up towards Lake Frome, and also Broken Hill and country between Maroo and Cooper's Creek. Attractive lantern slides from photographs taken by the lecturer were shown.

Professor Osborn said plants known as saltbush were some of the most characteristic vegetation of arid Australia. A number of conditions went to make up what was termed an arid climate. Of these the existence of a low rainfall was most important. A rough definition might be that an arid area was one having 10 in. or less annual rainfall. On such a definition no less than five-sixths of South Australia was arid. In round figures, out of a total area of 380,000 square miles 317,000 received 10 in. of rain or less in a year. That feature of their climate was either ignored or by many people regarded as something uncomplimentary to the State, and, as such, not to be mentioned by good patriots. Those attitudes he believed to be mistaken. No inconsiderable part of the State's wealth was derived from the exploitation of arid lands. A proper study of their vegetation was of great importance, not only because of its scientific interest, but because of the economic advantages that would result. Efficient exploitation of arid areas from the grazing point of view meant that the natural vegetation must suffer as little as possible. Throughout much of arid South Australia there grew the well-known salt or blue bush. Especially was this so in the belt extending from the Nullarbor Plain on the west across the whole width of the State to the Barrier Range. That country was far from being a desert. Even in those parts that were as yet unsettled, for example, the western part, the barrier to occupation was not wholly the lack of fodder plants.

Plant life in the salt bush country could be grouped into three classes. The annual grasses and flowering herbs grew in amazing numbers after heavy rain. However, they as quickly died away and passed into seed. They formed no permanent plant societies to fix the soil. An abundance of grass was a characteristic feature of many true deserts. Valuable as such grass might be for feed, it was merely temporary. To maintain a large animal population in the area other longer lived fodder plants were needed. That was especially true when as in much of arid South Australia they had drought cycles extending over a period of years, and not a regular alternation of wet and dry seasons. There were also low trees and woody shrubs, and many, like the mulga and sandalwood, were edible. Sheep and rabbits destroyed the seedlings of those plants, and unless some measure could be taken to allow seedlings to become established the ultimate extermination of such valuable trees could only be a matter of time, especially as mistletoes of various kinds became thick on older plants. The less palatable shrubs, on the other hand, did not suffer to the same extent. There were many kinds of half shrubby juicy-leaved plants—the salt and blue bushes. They formed the most important plant covering over vast areas. They were all more or less edible, but varied greatly in their palatability and

feeding values. Consequently if heavily grazed the more nutritious kinds tended to be eaten out. In extreme cases they might wholly disappear. The eating out salt bushes made room for more grasses, but as they were only annuals, there might be long periods when the area was little better than desert. The term "desert" was rightly unpopular with Australians when applied to most of the interior. It was certainly a slander on the salt bush districts so far as their natural condition went, but heavy stocking reduced the permanent vegetation to an amazing degree. It was a widespread belief that salt bush was salt because of the presence of salt in the soil. Analysis showed that the best kinds of salt bushes flourished in soils with only very little salt in them (.05 per cent.). A quantity of salt was found in the leaves of salt bushes. This was sometimes over 30 per cent. of the dry weight. Experiments conducted in the Adelaide University botanical laboratories had shown that the salt in the leaves aided the plants in absorbing water from dew or very light rains. Salt bushes were thus able to take directly into the leaves a precipitation that was too small to affect the roots. Plants growing in arid regions in South Africa and South America stored water in their leaves and stems which became very fleshy. Such succulents were surprisingly rare in arid South Australia. However, the salt bushes, by their remarkable power of taking in water through the leaves, could use the light falls of rain that were often a feature of their arid areas.

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Pen Portrait

Captain of Industry

Mr. E. W. Holden, B.Sc. (managing director of Holdens Body Builders, Limited), is an enthusiastic. The works that he has built up after years of work constitute his chief interest in life, and it is a hard matter to get him to talk about himself.



Mr. E. W. Holden, B.Sc.

Mr. Holden was born in South Australia, where his family have lived for several generations. After many years at Prince Alfred College, he finished his education at the Adelaide University, where he graduated in science. While at the University he assisted in the leather business of Holden & Frost, and it was with this firm that he got the business training that was later to help him build up one of the largest industries in Australia.

In 1917 an embargo was placed on the importation of completed cars to Australia, and realising the future ahead of motor body building he took over the management of the motor side of the business. Since then he has extended it from a small workshop to factories covering acres of ground and employing thousands of men. He modestly refrains from speaking of the years between, but they must have represented constant work and anxiety and tireless attention to detail.

Last year he visited Great Britain and America, still with the sole object of improving and extending his factory, and studied scientific business methods and plant organisation in the world's greatest factories. Mr. Holden gives a great deal of the credit of the success of his firm to his father, Mr. H. J. Holden, and to Mr. Charles Irwin, the first director. The Bank of Adelaide also has been a great factor in the success of the company, having always backed its enterprises. Golfing and tennis are Mr. Holden's chief relaxations.