

Register, September 2nd, 1910.

ADELAIDE UNIVERSITY.

EXTENSION POLICY.

DEPUTATION TO THE PREMIER.

On Thursday morning Mr. Ponder, M.P., introduced a large and representative deputation to the Premier (Hon. J. Verran), and asked for a Government subsidy pound for pound for buildings erected and to be erected, and in the event of the removal of the Destitute Asylum to give those grounds and buildings over for University extension purposes.

—Chancellor's Speech.—

The Chancellor (Sir Samuel Way) said they asked for the payment by the Government subsidy for the new buildings they had erected, and, secondarily, for the same subsidy for buildings of immediate urgency. The practice of granting the subsidy had existed since the foundation of the State 34 years ago. It had never been in doubt. During the last 10 years they had erected the Elder Hall and Conservatorium, the Prince of Wales Buildings, and the very much required medical school. They had cost £35,650, and the subsidy was £17,825. They did not apply for the subsidy at the time, in consequence of the financial stress, but they expected that payment when the opportune time occurred. They had immediate and very pressing wants for new buildings. During the last 10 years there had been an unprecedented expansion of the University. In 1899 there were 581 students, while now there were 1,040. Other comparisons were:—Professors, 8 and 11; lecturers, 16 and 29. For the last 20 years they had received no special grant except 5 per cent. per annum on their endowment. During the last six or seven years the Government of New South Wales had paid £150,000 for new University buildings. The Melbourne University in addition to the subsidy of £21,000 had received £37,000, and £70,000 had been spent by the Government on new buildings between 1883 and 1902. They wanted an extension of the library, which was crowded out, additional rooms for schools of classics and philosophy, and further accommodation for the law school, which at present had to scurry from room to room. Then adequate accommodation was needed for geological and mineralogical departments, for the caretaker's lodge, for herbarium and departments of botany, for common rooms for students, &c. The new buildings required would cost £11,000, and they asked for a Government subsidy of £5,500. They wanted to begin the work at once, and have it concluded by March, so as not to interfere with the work of the University. In regard to ground space, Melbourne had 100 acres, Sydney 128 acres, while Adelaide had only five acres. He would like to see the poor people in the Destitute enjoying fresh air and light employment, so conducive to the happiness of life in the country. In that event the Destitute Buildings could not be put to more worthy use than University extension. He asked Mr. Verran to use his strong influence to bring that about. The Register had made a statesmanlike suggestion, which they gladly emphasized, that to make the Education Block complete the University should have the two blocks to which he had referred. Then they would have a site which would be the envy of every State of Australia, and the admiration of visitors to their shores.

—Letter From Mr. R. Barr Smith.—

He had just received the following letter from Mr. Barr Smith, who had put the position with great weight:—"Dear Sir Samuel Way—I am very sorry I am not able to be with you on the deputation to the Premier to-day. I hope you will be able to convince him that there is no other public use to which the land you are applying for can be put, at all so important as using it for the subsidiary buildings necessary to the healthy expansion of the University. We are completely surrounded and hemmed in by other institutions; the sole outlet for the University is in the direction of the Destitute Asylum and the police parade ground. I hope you will be able to obtain the promise of a reversionary interest in these, and as immediate possession as is consistent with public convenience. It is our last chance; there is no other place available. We must go on greatly crippled if we do not get this land. In the eastern States the need of room by the universities has been there liberally provided for. The Premier must be convinced that your present application is very reasonable and moderate.—Always, yours very truly, R. Barr Smith." They did not require the £17,000 to put away in their coffers, but to replace the amount taken from the endowment fund. The money was to make their present work efficient.

He could mention the requests for further extension, which had been under consideration of council:—Schools of dentistry and veterinary science, with necessary teachers; additional professorships or lectureships—French, German, biology, pathology, ancient history, astronomy, botany, and zoology; subdivision of chairs—classics, economics and mental and moral science, and history and English language and literature, and residential colleges.

The Hon. R. Butler said it would be a great pity to make Federal property of one of the most valuable sites the State owned in Adelaide. (Hear, hear.) Both Mr. Peake and Mr. Price, as Premiers, had shown sympathetic interest in higher education, and Mr. Price had done a great deal to advance the system. The University of Adelaide stood in the front rank of similar Australian institutions. Members of

the Opposition did not regard the question as a party one, and any reasonable amount on the Estimates would have ready support.

The President of the Chamber of Commerce (Mr. E. W. van Senden) made a plea for an extension of instruction in commerce, and for the establishment of residential colleges, which should be self-supporting. Such colleges would be an immense boon.

Mr. Smeaton said he was present at the invitation of the University authorities. While the Defence Department required increased accommodation, he was prepared to devote all his advocacy to the interests of the University. Room for the Defence offices might be found elsewhere.

Mr. Young said the increase of secondary education justified extension. They had the advance of the last 20 years as a guide.

Mr. Ryan said the University in years to come would have to deal with thousands of additional students, and 30 or 40 acres was required as an adequate site.

The Premier said the question was too big for one little party, and was one deserving the sympathetic consideration of all. (Hear, hear.) The position was that the family of the University had grown too big for its house, and they were all pleased to know that. The State would never lose by helping educational institutions. As regarded the money suggested to be placed on the Estimates by Messrs. Peake and Butler, that matter would have careful consideration. If they were going to have a greater University more room was needed. The best was done at the time. Personally he questioned whether it was wise to attach more buildings to the present University. His own opinion was that Government House and the University should be out where there were fresher air and greater freedom.

Mr. Smeaton—That means a lot of money.

The Premier said that might be so, but they were not building for their day only. They should have an adequate site. It was a question whether there should not be 100 acres, so that they could build a University which would meet all requirements for the next 100 years. They had to seriously consider whether they should part with land that might be required for Government buildings, seeing that they had to pay £175, and even £200 a foot for it. That had been his view for seven years. He had a fine affection for the University, and fully recognised the magnificent value of its work. The Commonwealth was asking for the Destitute site, but they were not going to part with it. (Hear, hear.) All the points raised would receive the consideration of Cabinet.

—Questions in Assembly.—

In the Assembly on Thursday afternoon Mr. Young said for the guidance of members of the House he wanted to ask the Premier what rule was there with the Government as regarded the introduction of deputations. Must a deputation, where it dealt with a distinctly district matter, or dealt with a public matter or public institution, be introduced to any Minister by a member for the district, or was any member of Parliament competent to be the means of introducing the deputation? The Premier said he took it to be the duty of every member of Parliament that when there was a deputation to be introduced that belonged to his district to introduce it. The hon. member was referring to what had taken place that morning, and he would quite see he would have been intruding, if he had been allowed to introduce the deputation, on the rights of members for the District of Adelaide. (Mr. Young—"Certainly not.") That was what he thought. He took it to be the right of every member to introduce a deputation connected with his own district. (Mr. Jackson—"Is that the policy of the Government?") It was the policy of his Government. (Mr. Rudall—"This is a good chance for another Gilbert and Sullivan comedy.") The hon. member would not make a bad figure for it. (Mr. Rudall—"I would be sorry to be the figure you made this morning.") Mr. Young pointed out that a deputation of men from

the Gepp's Cross men had been introduced and heard by the Premier, although introduced by the member for Wallaroo. The Premier said the position was that the deputation had come at a moment's notice. Mr. Young then mentioned the occasion when the deputation from the Royal Agricultural Society approached the Government in reference to the registration of stallions. That deputation was introduced by Sir Lancelot Stirling. The Premier's final reply was that he had done nothing more than other members of the House had done. While he held the position he did he deemed it proper that a member for a district should have the right to introduce a deputation regarding the needs and requirements of his own district. What happened that morning was nothing unusual. (Minister of Education—"It was the University, so you must not say anything against it.") Mr. Peake—"It is different when it is a Trades Hall affair." If a man was elected member for a district, and a deputation asked for important concessions or grant from the Government, representatives of that district should have the right to introduce that deputation. (Mr. Rudall—"It was not a District of Adelaide matter. It was a State matter.")