

A GENEROUS CITIZEN

PROVISION FOR EDUCATION

SPLENDID GIFT FROM PETER WAITE

"URRBRAE" FOR THE UNIVERSITY.

The Premier made a pleasing and, to most members, surprising announcement in the House of Assembly yesterday. He said:—

"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 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 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 School at Ballarat, and was there confirmed in his desire to further agricultural education.

"I am pleased to be able to announce that the council of the University unanimously accepted the magnificent offer made to that institution and view Mr. Waite's action as highly patriotic and far-seeing. The Government views the offer as equally important, and has readily accepted same. In acknowledging our indebtedness to Mr. Waite we have the pleasure of knowing that all the members of his family are in full accord with his action. Mr. Waite is a gentleman who, by a life's work, has done a great deal (chiefly in association with the late Sir Thomas Elder) in developing our important pastoral interests in the interior. No name is better known in that respect. It is gratifying to find that Mr. Waite is so deeply interested in the further development of the producing interests, and sees in scientific education a substantial step in that direction. The fact that the University Agricultural School and the Agricultural High School will be side by side should induce to the success of both and to economy in the working of both. The proposed Fullarton road tramway will extend to both properties, which are within four miles of the General Post Office, and make them readily accessible.

"The offer was contained in two letters, the first of which was dated October 3 and addressed to myself. It read as follows:—Following upon our conversation of August 30 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 its control. I now formally offer to the Government of South Australia part section 250, Hundred of Adelaide, containing 114 acres, for the purpose 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 out 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 our 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.

"The second letter was addressed to the Chancellor of the University (Sir Samuel Way) and read as follows:—"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, is 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."

Continuing, Mr. Peake said he was sure hon. members would appreciate the great value of the munificent gift. The land altogether comprised close on 250 acres, situated in the county of Adelaide, and within four miles of the city. Not only was the land of great value, but the property contained a very fine

mansion. It was a joint gift to the State and to the University. It would enable the Government to adopt one of the recommendations of the Education Commission, which was that there should be an agricultural school established nearer the city, so that boys in the city could learn at least the elements—and possibly a great deal more than the elements—of farming, and would be better fitted to adopt a country life, and would exercise their faculties and energies to a greater extent. It would further have a tendency to draw away a great number of boys to become farmers and landholders by and by. He did not like to put a value on the gift, but it was between £40,000 and £50,000. Mr. Peter Waite had associated himself with other gentlemen whom they were proud to remember as having done great services by giving their means in order to benefit their fellows. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. Denny said it was difficult to express the great value of the gift made by Mr. Peter Waite. He noticed that in the correspondence the gift was pledged to a life interest to Mr. Waite and his wife. He asked whether that meant, notwithstanding that, that the magnificent gift would be immediately available.

The Premier said Mr. Denny was quite right in citing that as part of the condition. Of course, Mr. Waite was advanced in years and Mrs. Waite was not young, but hon. members should be very anxious that they would be in South Australia for many years yet. The part of the estate to be devoted to an agricultural high school would be available at once.