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16-8-23

UNIVERSITY EXPAN- SION.

EXEMPTION FROM LAND TAX.

A deputation from the University of Adelaide recently waited upon the Premier (Sir Henry Barwell) in connection with the disposal of the bequest made by Mr. Peter Waite for agricultural research, and asked that in order to increase the income exemption might be granted from land tax and district council rates. It was also requested that the Government, which now pay a 5 per cent. per annum subsidy on probate endowments, should raise the limitation from £10,000 to £20,000.

The Government have informed the Chancellor of the University (Sir George Murray) that the exemption from land tax would be granted and that the limitation referred to would be raised to £20,000.

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TAXATION CONCESSION TO UNIVERSITY.

A deputation from The Adelaide University waited upon the Premier (Sir Henry Barwell) recently in respect to the gift by the late Mr. Peter Waite, of the Urrbrae Estate, for scientific agricultural education. The deputation asked that, with a view to increasing the income, exemption from land tax and district council rates should be granted the University in respect to the estate, and also that the provisions of the University Act of 1894, under which the Government had subsidized private endowments to that institution up to a limit of £10,000 in one year, should be extended so that they might receive the benefit of the 5 per cent. interest on endowments up to £20,000. The Government has notified the Chancellor of the University that it will introduce a Bill to provide for the exemption of the University from land tax, and also to extend the subsidy on private endowments up to £20,000, as desired.

Herald

UNIVERSITY BEQUESTS INCREASED POWER TO SUBSIDISE.

In order that the University might obtain the fullest benefit from the Peter Waite bequest for the prosecution of agricultural research, a deputation from the Council of the University waited on the Chief Secretary some time ago with a number of requests. It was desired with a view of increasing the income from private bequests without losing the advantages of the Government subsidy that the amount of £10,000 provided in the University Act of 1894 as the limit to which the Government might go in subsidising, be increased to £20,000. On Thursday the Chief Secretary stated that the Government had notified the Council of the University that legislation would be introduced for this purpose. This means that the Government subsidy will be available for the income from bequests of a value of £200,000.

In respect to another request that property in private bequests be exempted from land tax, steps will be taken to comply with that also.

Departure of D. J. R. Sumner.

All will miss Dr. D. J. R. Sumner, the Rhodes scholar, who left for Oxford this week. His career at the university in the old country will be watched with very much interest by his many friends in this State, all of whom are assured that he will have a brilliant course. The fact that he already has his degree will make matters very comfortable for him, and will enable him to enter the sporting and social aspect of university life with



DR. D. J. R. SUMNER,
who left this week for Oxford.

more ease than if he had to spend long periods in close study for degrees. That he will pay as much attention to lawn tennis as his time will permit goes without saying, for he is a devotee of the game, and starts his career over there at it with the knowledge of the experience gained in good company here, and the prospect of learning much and improving greatly by taking advantage of the many opportunities afforded a student in England to get good tennis. All hope that, if not next summer, at all events the year after, that he will be considered good enough to be chosen in the big match against Cambridge. Personally, I have not the slightest doubt that this will be so, for he has great natural ability at the game, and is of a type that improve greatly with constant practice. He will be much missed from the ranks of the University team, for which he has done capital service during the past year or two. He has given promise lately of developing into one of the best players in the State. For the Adelaide University Sumner has done remarkably well in the game. In the Niall Cup competition in Sydney last year he beat Harbison (Melbourne), 1-0, 6-1, 6-4, and was beaten by Fitts only by 13-11, 7-5. This year he met the two best New South Wales players and beat them both, scoring 6-3, 2-6, 6-2 against G. C. Halliday, and 8-6, 7-5, against J. H. Halliday. In the doubles G. M. Hope and he won from Halliday and Todd, 6-4, 4-6, 6-4.

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A SCIENTIST'S GENEROSITY.

An offer by Dr. Mackenzie to present to the Commonwealth the valuable collection of marsupial dissections and microscopic sections of the Australian Institute of Anatomical Research, of which he is director, has been accepted by the Federal Government (states The Melbourne Age). The Prime Minister said on Tuesday that Dr. Mackenzie had most generously made this offer, and had also offered to house the collection free of charge until it could be removed to Canberra; to maintain at his own expense during this period a reservation of 80 acres at Badger Creek, Healesville, in which certain of the rarer Australian fauna were living in the natural state, and to give his services free of charge as director in furtherance of the work of the institute. Mr. Bruce said the Government had decided to accept this public-spirited offer, and he felt that the people of Australia and the scientific world generally were under a deep debt of gratitude to Dr. Mackenzie for the time and expense he had devoted to the acquisition of his very valuable collection and for the practical patriotism he had displayed in undertaking to continue his efforts to promote the study of comparative anatomy, and to co-operate in the development of what would be ultimately a Commonwealth institution of Australian zoo-

THE LAND.

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RESEARCH AND EDUCATION

16 AUG 1923

Address by Professor Perkins

South Australia's Fine Progress.

In an interesting address on agricultural research and education, at the Pan-Pacific Congress in Melbourne, on Wednesday, Professor A. J. Perkins (Director of Agriculture) gave a descriptive outline of the wonderful progress made in four generations by South Australian farmers. He held that on a population basis we can challenge comparison with any country.

The thought that representatives from older countries might be disposed to cavil at our claim to speak on these subjects was unavoidable, remarked the professor. On reflection, however, rightly or wrongly, I have satisfied myself that we can make good this claim, however much our methods and work may have differed from what obtains elsewhere. Here in Australia we have found ourselves, a mere handful of men and women, confronted by conditions for the most part unknown, without a body of inherited tradition to guide us, and the wilderness to conquer. No degree of research was practicable until circumstances had rendered the local atmosphere favourable to its prosecution. We believe that during the lifetime of the present generation much has been done towards meeting the requirements of the farming community, and that our rapidly rising agricultural production is some evidence in our favour. Let it be noted that our history as an agricultural community does not extend further back than four generations for a small section of the continent, and not more than two and three for the vast balance. Our rawness cannot, therefore, be gainsaid, and in the circumstances, an agricultural and pastoral revenue (1921) of about £260,000,000 is something very much to the credit of a little over five and a half million people. It represents over £47 a head of population. Only 15 years earlier (1906) this revenue was little more than £80,000,000, or £20 9/6 a head.

Third Generation's Achievement.

If it be asked in what manner research and education have contributed to the rapidity of our material progress (observed Professor Perkins), I shall say that three generations ago the agricultural possibilities of the country were unknown quantities; that after early skimming of obvious natural fertility the first two generations fought unaided a gradually losing battle against Nature; and that it was left to the third generation, assisted by research and education, to turn the tide of battle, and lift agriculture to its present condition of prosperity and affluence. The special part played by these two factors is perhaps difficult to particularize apart from details. Nevertheless, attention may be drawn in this connection to the systematic accumulation of meteorological data throughout the Commonwealth. It constitutes research work of first importance, and has rendered possible the early classification of districts and their agricultural possibilities. As early as 1865 the late Mr. G. W. Goyder (a former Surveyor-General) was able to trace over the map of South Australia a rainfall line north of which farmers would attempt to grow wheat at their peril. And even to-day we are able to admire the accuracy with which Goyder's line was drawn. Without meteorological research progress would have been slow indeed, and the road to agricultural settlement strewn with economic wrecks. We have, I believe, made remarkable progress with wheat, and notwithstanding our relatively low mean yields, I question whether to-day there is any other country of similar area making better use of its economic, climatic, and soil conditions for the same purpose. In 1860 we had about 644,000 acres under wheat, yielding 10,500,000 bushels; 60 years later, in 1920, we had over 9,000,000 acres, yielding approximately 146,000,000 bushels. I am aware that these figures are dwarfed by the production of countries such as the United States and Russia. On a population basis, however, we can challenge comparison with any country. Within the space of three generations our people have learnt how to grow wheat in

a country, the general conditions of which were at the outset totally unknown. By this I wish to assert that to-day our best farmers are extracting from the land the highest yields that local conditions permit of. This, I submit, is no mean feat for so brief a period. That there is still ample room for improvement in the mean yields of districts and States may be freely admitted. Towards this end education, in its broadest meaning, may be said already to have set its hand to the plough.

Fine Collection of Local Wheats.

Doubtless the question of suitable varieties puzzled our pioneer farmers long before the system of tillage had become more or less standardized. At the outset we depended naturally upon importations from abroad, and from time to time practically every available type has received more or less extended local trial, from the slow-growing, carpet-like winter wheats of colder countries to the fast-growing spring types of wheat from countries with relatively short growing periods. To-day, on the other hand, over the 9 to 10 million acres which we sow annually to wheat it would be hard to find any important area under wheat of foreign origin. The vast majority of our wheats have been raised locally, and I doubt whether anywhere else in the world is to be found a finer collection of varieties, maintained systematically at a high standard of production by rigid and continuous selection. Indeed, the tide of importation has now turned and there is already evidence that Australian varieties are making their way into other countries similarly situated. In creating these varieties we have aimed at disease-resistance, high yields, quality of flour, harvesting convenience, resistance to rough weather, and so on; and all this implies research work of no mean order, while the general acceptance of new varieties by the farming community is a tribute to the educational effort which must have preceded acceptance. I have felt the invidiousness of mentioning names in an address such as this, and had hoped to be able to avoid it. Nevertheless, I cannot in this connection resist the temptation to do honour to the late William Farrer, the father of all our wheat breeders, who set himself the task of developing rustproof wheats, and ultimately left to us some of the best all-round varieties we possess to-day. His name will not be soon forgotten in Australia.

Solving Difficult Problems.

Another difficulty that we have solved in original manner was how to feed our working teams, without whose assistance wheat could not have been raised. Contrary to the practice of other countries we made the wheatfield keep itself. In other words, we were free from the natural, inherited prejudices of older countries, in which it would have been deemed a sin to feed wheat to any but human beings, and we made hay of it. This may seem simple enough; nevertheless, it was an innovation, and only research could indicate how this hay should be made and handled, and fed to best advantage. This we have done, and our experience is available for the use of others. Like others, we have had to face parasitic disease and its consequences, and have succeeded in circumstances, if not in overcoming it. Red rust, once virulent, is to-day more or less unimportant. "Take-all," the consequences of virulent development of the wheat stem killer in new, roughly tilled country, has proved serious at times, but can be controlled. And similarly with other minor diseases that have affected our crops from time to time. Again, not only theoretically, but practically also, the local application of manures and fertilizers has received satisfactory solution. Hitherto in Australia phosphatic manures alone appear to have given uniformly satisfactory results with wheat. Of these the water soluble superphosphate is in all but universal use. To-day, the farmer who sows wheat without superphosphate, is the exception rather than the rule. It is estimated that our wheatfields absorb about 375,000 tons a year. We lay no claim to the discovery of superphosphate. We were, however, quick to recognise its value, and, moreover, were among the first to demonstrate on a large scale the stimulating effects of what elsewhere would be considered very light dressings of this manure. I am of the opinion, too, that we have proved very definitely that under our conditions of climate, wheat can be grown very advantageously on soils far lighter in texture than is commonly recognised in other countries. We have an abundance of soils of this type—mallee lands we call them—which elsewhere would be relegated to barley, or even rye, but on which we have been able to grow wheat quite satisfactorily. Indeed, in years of light rainfall it is generally from these light soils that we look for our most successful crops.

(To be continued.)