

Register 24 10 23
NORTH TERRACE, NORTH OF THE ESPLANADE.

Chapters from History.

1.—By G. E. Owen-Smyth, C.M.G., I.S.O.

In my contribution published in The Register on Monday, October 15, the Esplanade was dealt with. I now propose to give some particulars of the land bounded on the west by King William road, on the east by the Botanic Gardens and Park, on the north by the River Torrens, and on the south by the North terrace esplanade. In 1876 the buildings erected on the above area were:—Government House, the South Australian Institute (one half the present building), the Destitute Asylum, a portion of which consisted of the original barracks for the regiment of Imperial troops, who only left South Australia in about 1870. On one occasion the officer commanding the 18th Royal Irish was Acting Governor of South Australia. I allude to Major-Gen. Rooke, at the time a regimental major, if my memory serves me. To proceed with my story, the remaining buildings in 1876 were:—The Mounted Police Barracks, including the Military Staff Office; the expensive powder magazine, near the Torrens, not mounded; the other magazine was transferred to the University as a dissecting room; and the University main building. I think possibly this building was not then finished. At the back of Government House was the site of an old quarry, where good specimens of fossils were procurable in the old days. Adjoining King William road to the east was the repository for street sweepings, consisting of horse manure and street mud or dust, according to the time of the year. Roughly, from memory I think I began to operate on the land at the rear of Government House Domain in 1886. Preparations were then in progress for the Jubilee Exhibition of 1887, and some thousands of yards of filling were obtained from the ground east of the old quarry, and used as filling behind the retaining walls then being constructed under my superintendence north of the main exhibition building, at the time in process of erection under Messrs. Withall & Wells, the successful architects for the competitive designs called for by the Jubilee Exhibition Committee, under the presidency of the late Sir Edwin Smith, M.P. In 1886 he was Mr. E. T. Smith, M.P., Mayor of Adelaide.

The slopes at the rear of Government House not providing sufficient filling, the Labour Prison at Dry Creek was authorized by the Government of the day to fill railway trucks with soil and quarry debris for the necessary levelling up of the main terrace gardens, thus saving the exhibition committee a large sum of money. I regret to say that the said committee was not very grateful, or at least did not show it, for all the work done on their behalf by the Works and Buildings Department. Ten years afterwards I was presented with a gold medal—a large one—for services rendered. It never saw the light until 1919, when I was leaving South Australia, and it went with odd pieces of old gold into the melting pot.

Victoria Drive and the Date Palms.
To return to the rear of Government House, the present Victoria Drive was dedicated to the City of Adelaide in 1886, and was formed at once, making a very necessary communication between King William road at the City Bridge and the Botanic Park and Zoological Gardens on Frome road. Later the City Gardener planted some palms near the King William road end of the drive, and some elms, &c., at rear of the Jubilee Oval. The City Council also obtained possession of the banks of the river at this time, and improved the ground by planting.

The Works and Buildings Department, of which I became the permanent head in June, 1886, was placed in possession of the vacant land south of the Victoria Drive. The first effort to improve the general appearance of this blot on the landscape was to fill up the old quarry, and form the grassed slopes and terraces at the rear of Government House and running from King William road to the old Mounted Police Barracks. This was not done in a day or even a couple of years. The filling cost the South Australian taxpayer nothing. Contractors for the excavation of cellars and foundation generally in the city were only too glad of a tip for their excavated material within a short distance of the business centre of the city. The City Council also continued to tip street sweepings, and in due time terraces, running east and west were formed, grassed, and planted.

The two rows of date palms on the top levels originated from date stones which came from the sweepings of the gutters of the Theatre Royal in Hindley street. The stones were mixed up with street sweepings and thrown on the tip. In process of time a thick crop of baby date palms resulted, which, when fit to transplant, were put into the holes already prepared. Many of these holes were picked out of the solid rock, hence the fact that those palms running east and west have not thriven like those running north and south, about which anon. The bougainvillias on the north aspect of the Government House Domain boundary wall were planted at the same time, also numerous trees lower down. All had to be kept alive in the great summer heat by water, and the work had to be done economically, for very little general sympathy was shown in those days for city improvements. Indeed, I remember one hot air merchant in Parliament losing off on the absurdity of planting palms, and mentioning my name as a sort of palm-planting maniac.

Later the huge mass of street sweepings, the result of years of tipping, was levelled and shaped on the east side of King William road, and big holes were picked and dug out of the mass, which had gone hard, cemented together by the liquid mud. These holes were filled with rich silt from the mud banks of the Torrens close alongside, and one terrifically hot day in November many years ago I planted those palms on the east side of King William road, running north and south. I got them, a job lot, out of Mr. Sewell's nursery on Payneham road. They were stunted but strong six or seven years old palms, which, when planted out in rich loam with plenty of water, went ahead like wild fire for a year or two; later they had to harden off and take their chance. The hedges were planted, grass plots formed, and some bougainvillias also put in to give some spots of rich colour, the grandiflora being chosen instead of the splendens. The formation of the military parade ground is another story.

Register
24 10 23

EDUCATION METHODS.

Mr. McCoy on the Continent.

New Ideas in Agricultural Study.

Mr. W. T. McCoy (Director of Education), who, with the Victorian Director of Education (Mr. W. Tate), has been touring Scandinavia in connection with their world quest on education, writing to the Minister for Education (Hon. T. Pascoe) from Gothenberg, Sweden, said that both in that country and Denmark they had secured much information of quite a different kind from what they had expected. Except for the few students who attended colleges similar to Roseworthy, there was very little of agricultural education. School gardening, nature study, and woodwork found a place in the country primary schools, but the authorities and farmers were strongly of opinion that if a boy was not prepared to go to a college like Roseworthy between the ages of 16 and 19, he should go on to a farm, and at 20 years return for five months to a People's High School. These institutions have filled Mr. McCoy with admiration because of the work accomplished. Those countries, continued, aimed at making good Danes or Swedes, and were certainly successful. The leaders were men filled with religious and patriotic fervour, of a kind peculiar to those small countries, where the people had had to fight to hold their country, and where the long period of farming activity in the winter season permitted of agricultural education. Scandinavians had a strong belief in education. Mr. McCoy, on the day of writing, visited a primary school accommodating 2,400 pupils, and employing 90 teachers. The building had three Sloyd rooms, three cookery rooms, three laundries, and two gymnasiums, besides metal work, sewing and drawing rooms, teachers' rooms, and so on. The school cost £240,000 before the war.

bold
advertiser 25 10 23
There were 30 other schools in Gothenburg not so large as this, but still larger than the biggest in South Australia, and the population was about the same as that of Adelaide. In addition, there were commercial and junior technical schools for boys and girls of from 12 to 16 years, and gymnasiums (high schools) for pupils from 12 to 18 years.

No Knowledge of Australia.

In the primary school that day (proceeded Mr. McCoy), he was amazed to find how little the children knew of Australia. None of them had ever heard of Adelaide, but Mr. Tate was delighted to find one who knew Melbourne. The Swedes were hefty, honest, hard-working folk, and a few hundreds of them in South Australia would do a great deal of good, but many of them apparently believed that Swedes and Danes were prohibited from coming to Australia, although they were welcomed to both the United States of America and Canada. The schools were open six days a week, with a holiday on Saturday once a month. The hours were longer, namely, from 8 until 4, and even 5 o'clock. In several schools the younger children came in relays. From 8 until 10, and 12 until 2, and from 10 to 12, and 2 to 4. In that way they got over the overcrowding problem. He had not seen any temporary buildings in any Continental country. The systems of Sweden, Denmark, and Switzerland provided Australia with much to imitate, but he was not much impressed with what he had seen in Holland and Belgium, and the schools in Italy and France were closed for the holidays. Mr. McCoy stated that he was leaving on September 28 for a hurried trip through the United States and Canada.

Register
24 10 23

Professor Mitchell has been re-elected President of the South Australian branch of the League of Nations Union.

Register
25 10 23

THE FORESTRY APPOINTMENT.

To the Editor.

Sir—Before it is too late I think that the public should know more about the applications for the position of Conservator of Forests. I wish to make it quite clear that I am not personally known to Mr. Corbin. That gentleman for a number of years has rendered invaluable service to the State in the matter of forestry, both at the University and in the department itself, and has also been most helpful to any one going in for forestry in a private way. Why then has Mr. Corbin been overlooked, and a stranger appointed to fill the position of Conservator of Forests? If Mr. Corbin is not capable of filling the position of Conservator, he cannot logically be capable of filling the much more difficult and important position that he occupies at present.—I am, Sir, &c.,

"FAIRPLAY."

Sir—The Premier is reported as saying of Mr. Corbin that he is lacking in business acumen and in administrative capacity. What proof has the Government that their selection has ever had the opportunity to develop it, if he possesses it, in the posts he has held? The Premier's statement that Mr. Corbin was "quite possibly doing very good work" is ungenerous, considering that the demonstration at Kuitpo should revolutionize the present expensive system; it is a bare truism to say that unless Mr. Corbin's system is adopted this State will continue to spend large and increasing sums yearly to buy the hard and soft woods required by the State. The appointment means also the perpetuation of the mischievous and costly system of placing in the position of controlling head a politician quite ignorant of the whole thing. I feel deep regret at the Cabinet's action. Such doings as these exasperate intelligent voters. At a large monetary loss these mistakes have to be remedied, as, for instance, the Cabinet has courageously endeavoured to remedy the inept blundering of past politicians and officials, at a very huge sum, for the railways.—I am, Sir, &c.,
SAML. DIXON.

FOREST WASTE.

Unless the Commonwealth Government can advance substantial reasons for the decision to transfer the Forest Products Laboratory from Perth to Melbourne the protest raised in the Western State against this decision will find ready sympathy in all parts of Australia. As Mr. S. L. Kessell, the Conservator of Forests, who gained his degree in forestry science at the Adelaide University, has pointed out in the annual report of his department, not only has the Western Australian Government provided 30 per cent. of the funds expended in connection with the maintenance of the Commonwealth institution, but "all the work of any considerable value undertaken by the Laboratory has been initiated, and in many cases carried out, by Western Australians." That there is abundant scope for the energies of such an institution is apparent. No State in the Commonwealth is more vitally concerned than is Western Australia in the results of well-directed investigations which have for their object the fullest and most economical utilisation of forest products. The Laboratory scheme had its origin with Mr. Lane Poole, a previous Conservator of Forests in the Western State, to whose far-seeing policy and wealth of expert knowledge the Commonwealth as a whole is greatly indebted. Useful work has already been done by the Laboratory, but this is only a beginning. If anything approaching the full potential value of Australian timbers is to be obtained by the various States, investigation will have to be carried on by qualified men in many directions. The time is long overdue for the elimination of waste in respect to all the great natural resources of the country. As regards minerals, and especially coal, this is universally recognised, but it is no less imperative in relation to timber. That Australia has been reckless in the dissipation of natural wealth of this order is well known, and something is being done in all the States to reduce the wanton destruction of trees, and to replace, in some measure at least the depleted forests. But waste is not confined to the cruder forms of consigning to the flames wood suitable for the saw mill, any more than in its application to coal it is limited to combustion in ill-designed and badly constructed furnaces. To get the largest practical results from a given area of timbered land should be the object of the State departments. With the ever-expanding demand for paper, the possibilities of Australian hardwoods as a source from which pulp can be obtained become increasingly important. That further experiments in this connection will be conducted may be regarded as certain. Probably work of this class can be carried on as effectively in Melbourne as at any other centre in the Commonwealth, but it is not enough to show that no actual disability will attend the removal of the Forest Products Laboratory in respect to one branch of its work. It should be demonstrated that there is to be a real gain. Not only so, there is always a danger when a particular institution, charged with specific functions, becomes merged in a large and comprehensive concern like the Institute of Science and Industry, that it will lose its original character and definiteness of purpose. Investigations into the suitability of Australian timbers for the manufacture of wood pulp have not been confined exclusively to the Forest Products Laboratory in Perth, or to any Commonwealth institution. Useful work has been done in several States, both by public and private bodies. It is now some years since Dr. Hargreaves first reported on "The prospects of establishing a paper-making industry in South Australia," and pointed out that the sources of wood which might be utilised for the purpose of pulp were principally hardwoods and pines. The latter, it was mentioned, grow well and arrive at maturity from 20 to 25 years. The attempt to cut out waste in regard to timber has to be carried beyond the growing and sawing