

HELPING THE UNIVERSITY.

Parliament's Acquiescence.

Further consideration was given in the House of Assembly on Thursday to the Adelaide University Act Amendment Bill the main reasons for which are to increase the Government grant to that institution from £10,000 to £20,000, and to exempt the University from land taxation. The second reading debate on the measure was continued by Mr. Hill (who thoroughly approved of its principles. He said he believed in every possible provision being made for advanced education. The University should be made accessible, if possible, to any one in the State who desired higher education. He would approve of an even more vigorous policy of educational grants than was suggested in the present measure. The reason why other chairs had not been established at the University was that the institution had not the requisite funds. The three sciences for which additional professors were needed were economics, modern languages, and forestry.

Mr. Anthony also supported the Bill. He stressed the importance of the University, if only for its research work, which might well prove of enormous value to the State as a whole. He felt sure that in that respect the Waite bequest would have important results. Some suggested that University fees should be done away with; but, in his opinion, that would be an unwise course to adopt, for there would be a danger of creating an intellectual proletariat. If a thing were made too cheap a good deal of its value was lost. In his opinion, and while not desiring to starve the medical and legal work, greater attention should be given to technical and agricultural education.

Mr. Hudd referred to the splendid work that was being done by the University authorities. The money placed in their hands was, he said, spent with great judgment. Particular credit was due to Sir George Brookman for what he had done. The main reason for the introduction of the Bill was to enable the full value of the splendid bequest made by Mr. Waite to be realized. This could not be achieved unless an additional grant were made by the Government for the necessary annual expenditure. With the extra sum the Waite agricultural research section would be able to do excellent work, and in that respect South Australia would lead the Universities of Australia. He commended the Government for having brought down the measure. The community as a whole was indebted to the many public-spirited citizens who had made substantial requests and endowments to the institution.

The Bill was read a second time and taken through committee without amendment.

WOODMAN, SPARE THAT TREE.

A FORESTRY REVIVAL.

IV.—By the President S.A. Branch Forest League (Sir William Sowden).

Local Governing Bodies.

The profitableness of forestry operations by local governing bodies has long since been demonstrated, and increasing attention is being paid even in Australia to the character of an enterprise which has enabled some Continental cities to dispense with rates because the trees yield all the revenue required. Among the numerous official publications issued from the Forest Service in New Zealand (in contrast to South Australia, where exceedingly little is done in this way) is one signed by the District Conservator—for in the Dominion the work of detailed supervision is left by the Director to competent men. These officers are expected to share the responsibilities of management without constant visits from the chief, who, apart from infrequent periodical inspections, is too profitably absorbed in devising and administering essential principles of research and operation to have time to travel needlessly and give specific orders which should be taken for granted. The document following was addressed to members of Dominion local governing bodies in particular, and it is typical of the official forest propaganda in New Zealand:—

Capital Advice.

"You, as a public body, are the custodians of a large and valuable portion of the public wealth—its roads, bridges, and culverts, besides, in many cases, valuable buildings, reserves, &c. You are elected to look after the present and future welfare of all the property in your charge, and have possibly to contend with the unfortunate conditions brought about by mistakes which occurred many years ago. Some of you have perhaps been occupying similar positions for long periods, and have seen your bridges and culverts built and renewed many times. What have been your timber costs in this respect? Has the timber been easy to get even at the prices you paid for it, and has it always been satisfactory after you have used it? Where will the next requirements come from, and what will you have to pay for them? Why not start now and grow your requirements, and keep the money in your own district? These, gentlemen, are questions which, in the interests of the ratepayers, call for the serious consideration of yourselves and your officers. You most likely have in your district many small corners, reserves, steep road faces, and other places where small plantations of valuable timber-producing trees could be grown, and which would not require much fencing to keep out wandering stock for a few years until trees planted thereon got up out of reach. A good number of these are in close proximity to where the timber produced would eventually be required, which would save a large outlay in cartage and handling. Occasional attention by your employes would suffice to keep these in good order as long as was necessary, and could be done in the course of their ordinary employment when working in the vicinity. Such areas stocked with well-selected species might possibly assure your ordinary needs in perpetuity, besides having an esthetic value which would be appreciated by most ratepayers. These remarks do not necessarily suggest a large scheme involving heavy expenditure. They are intended to draw your attention to the fact that it is possible for you to provide for your future requirements in the way of timber suitable for bridges, culverts, rails for approaches to bridges, fencing, power-transmission poles, buildings, and in fact, all your needs, by adopting a planting policy consistent with your means and requirements. They are also intended to impress you with the fact that it will pay you handsomely to do so. The security of the class of timber required for many of the above-mentioned purposes is becoming more and more acute, and even at present must be a big drain on the ratepayers' pockets. Much of that now purchased is not only costly and difficult to get, but is of unsatisfactory quality and soon requires renewing. Many of the in-

troduced trees grow rapidly to a merchantable size and produce a quantity of material to the acre which is probably equalled in few parts of the world. Reliable information in connection with the converting of Pinus insignis plantations of from 35 to 40 years of age show that a yield of from 100,000 to 125,000 superficial feet of sawn timber is common. Many of the valuable eucalypts produce an equally heavy crop; and, as large quantities of the crop can be used in the round for electric transmission poles and like purposes, the waste factor is reduced to a minimum. In short, an acre of Pinus insignis about 33 years old is worth from £250 to £500; an acre of eucalyptus of the same age from £750 to £1,500, according to species and accessibility. The State Forest Service has accumulated, during the past 20 years, a large amount of information relating to the growth of introduced trees, and is keen to co-operate with you in a tree-planting scheme, large or small. You can secure the benefit of their experience free of charge, and the services of a tree-planting inspector, who will meet you to discuss any proposal and draw up a working plan for you. Trees and tree seeds, to suit any particular scheme you have in mind, can be supplied to you on favourable terms. By co-operating with this service in the important work of providing for the timber requirements of your constituency in the comparatively near future you will be assisting in ameliorating the

conditions of a world-wide shortage of timber, which at present seems probable within the next 20-25 years." The officially estimated acre value of eucalypts seems extreme, but the figures are transcribed accurately.

Enterprising Actions.

Stimulated by such encouragement as this, several municipal and similar corporations have been at work in forestry for years, and their number is increasing. As a fair example of these may be offered the Selwyn Plantation Board, which operates on Canterbury Plains, in the neighbourhood of Christchurch. Its delegates come from 10 county councils, and the board is composed, with its Chairman, of 11 members, all unpaid excepting a small amount for meeting fees and travelling expenses. The board was established in 1911, and it is now conducting what is claimed to be one of the largest enterprises of the kind in the British Empire. Included within the domain of the board are 7,000 acres of practically man-made forest; and the board is now considering a 20-years' scheme, which would add to its possessions an additional 5,500 acres, at a cost of £37,000. The revenue is obtained from various sources. About £2,000 a year comes from firewood made available by forest thinning. Fencing posts return a substantial receipt, and rents and royalties are credited with £2,400. The latest balance sheet shows a credit of about £7,000, which is soundly invested in war loan and other gilt-edged securities. The cost of management is comparatively small, although in New Zealand, as elsewhere, the authorities find that—if they want good foresters—they must pay them good salaries. In this board's scheme of work natural regeneration is specially favoured.

Private Enterprise.

Apparently there is no longer any doubt concerning the substantial profit which the State can draw directly and indirectly from scientific forestry, and only persons who have not studied the subject now gainsay the value of tree-planting as a private investment. After careful examination of the evidence a forest expert in New Zealand has arrived at the conclusion, already announced by Mr. Corbin and other authorities in South Australia, that private forest-owning is a sound business investment. He adds that the highest expenditure on formation of a plantation should not exceed £10 an acre, and may be as low as £6. He assumes that the market value of timber may double in 10 years, and on these bases of computation the financial returns would be—pinus insignis 30 to 40 years old, £250 to £500 an acre; other coniferous trees, such as Douglas fir, Californian redwood, pinus strobus, and pinus ponderosa, 40 to 50 years, £500 to £1,000 an acre. After discussing details the same expert shows that, with average advantages and risks, "By the thirty-fourth year all the capital expenditure will have been recovered, and the owner possess a property worth £40,000, bringing in a clear annual revenue of £2,000." Mr. Corbin writes on this question of private forestry:—The two objections to forestry seem to be only one—that woods take too long for the small man to foster before he gets any return, but this can be shown to be incorrect in the main—e.g., consider the fortunate person who has a farm or a property in a place of suitable rainfall. He has many days in the winter when he could put in trees instead of wasting and even killing time. A few trees put in each year—say, 1,000 pine trees—on land which is often otherwise useless, would bring him in a substantial profit.

After about 10 years he would be able, with good management, to sell thinnings, which would probably defray the whole outlay on the work. The careful tending of the trees on a property will repay the cost several times. He could build up very cheaply a very valuable asset."

No Forest Fires.

Mr. Corbin gives the assurance that forest fires can be prevented by sound management, and "wood forests should not be any more liable to be burnt than hay stacks, houses, cities, or liners." In New Zealand great success in safeguarding against bush fires, and the vandalism which so often causes them has been gained through preventive measures in the first instance, and tactful appeals to the people in the second. For example, the traveller is requested by placard to remember that "these are your own forests," is advised to protect them in his own interest as well as because the law will punish him severely if he fails to do so.

Striking Figures.

Private forestry has been likened to a form of life assurance which is immune from any possible failure of companies, or questionable investments. In many countries it became a fashion long ago for parents to plant a number of trees on the birth of a child—in fact, to secure a fortune for him on his reaching the age when he might most need the money which the forest group would provide. Those best acquainted with the subject argue that there is no reason why a man of 25 years should not plant a wood, and be owner of a valuable property before he reaches his 50th year. Timber from a good "natural" forest has been sold in this State for as much as £35 an acre—a handsome profit on even £10, estimating that to include the cost of the land. In a "planted" softwood forest the best plantation would yield 100,000 super ft. to the acre at about 30 years after the planting; and meanwhile there would be subsidiary returns through thinnings and other things. The value of the timber as it stood, would be over £400 an acre, and the clear profit from the plantation at least £10 an acre yearly. On the ground, without being felled, a single well-developed redgum tree has been sold for a £25 royalty, and a pine tree from £5 up-

ward. A whole forest of pines made a clear profit of £230 an acre at 30 years; and this was a wood which had not been managed on silvicultural lines.

Private Transactions.

A few days ago Mr. Joseph Bower, of Woodville, kindly gave me particulars regarding a Moreton Bay fig tree which had been planted between 60 and 70 years ago, probably by the grandfather of Mr. F. J. Bailey, the Director of the Adelaide Botanic Gardens. The plant grew into a huge tree, so large that it could span the width of King William street, Adelaide. Recently the tree had to be removed, and it yielded 6,000 super ft. of fine timber, valued, at the rate of 6d. a ft., at £150. After payment of incidental costs the owner, on sale of the wood at Pengeley's, at Edwardstown, realized a profit of £100. Some months ago I was a guest of the shrewd general manager of the Broken Hill Zinc Corporation's forest at Myponga, and careful personal observation justified the record that "the present appearance of the forest suggests strikingly the wisdom of those who—in spite of much discouragement—have been advocating the investment of private money in forestry. Certainly some years must pass before the full fruition of such an undertaking, but in this vast district land is cheap and specially adapted to the growth of trees; and while the young ones are coming up many of the old ones may be turned into cash by means of the timber mills and yards." Last February I visited, near to Christchurch, in New Zealand, a private plantation which had been planted 40 years before by its present owner—about 1,500 acres of different kinds of trees of economic value. As soon as the timber was ready to be cut and sold on the royalty principle a gradually increasing revenue began to be received; and for several years past the owner has had a steady income of £1,200 a year from royalties paid by a timber milling company. That concern has every reasonable prospect of indefinite success, for by the time it has gone through the forest from one end to the other it will be able, with further maturing and regeneration of trees, to repeat the process, and "comb" the forest again and again. The operations involved the owner in no expense, and practically the forest cost him nothing from the start—except interest on the price of the land—as the trees were left largely to themselves. The yield of timber is about 100,000 ft. to the acre. As an illustration of the fact that small things may be added the fact that one acre of the estate was devoted to oaks, and from these the proprietor makes a clear profit of £30 a year by turning into the grove pigs bought in poor condition, and selling them at a

A NEW COLLEGE.

The Collegiate School Committee of the Congregational Union has entered into an agreement to purchase a property known as "Gwent," situated at the corner of East Parade extension and Shipster's road, Kensington. Possession will be taken on December 15 of this year, and the school will be opened on or about February 1 next year. The head master will be Mr. J. A. Haslam, B.Sc., and the second master has not yet been appointed. The assistant masters will be Mr. F. M. Burgess, B.A., and Mr. K. W. A. Smith. A preparatory school will be in charge of Miss E. W. Rutt, and a physical training section under the control of Mr. C. E. Bennett. The new school will be capable of imparting instruction to boys from the preparatory stage to the highest stage necessary for entering university, commercial or agricultural life, and the boarding portion of the school will be made a special feature. The Congregationalists of this State are loyally standing behind this new educational movement.