

THE UNIVERSITY OF ADELAIDE.

ITS EARLY HISTORY.

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There is little room for doubt in the minds of those who regard the evidential value of documents which deal with the earliest incidents in connection with the founding of the province of South Australia, that so comprehensive a scheme of settlement for the community to be included amongst the institutions which were sure to materialise when time and opportunity made possible, a University. The material advantages anticipated were based upon a mental, moral, and religious foundation that was regarded as essential to a happy, prosperous, and contented community, and all institutions which would contribute to the realisation of such an ideal must have been within the purview of the authors of the scheme.

The question of the time and occasion when the thought of establishing a higher centre of educational influence was first mooted may be variously answered. First, as to the earliest recorded mention of it; secondly, as to the action that made the proposal for its realisation possible; and, thirdly, in the query, is there room for reasonable conjecture that the hope for such a foundation was voiced before the two former occurred? In point of time the first recorded suggestion of the establishment of a University is contained in a letter from Bishop Short to the Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge, dated April 11, 1849, a copy of which is preserved in the archives department of the Public Library. It is unnecessary to quote the passage in the letter relating to this matter, as it contains little more than a casual reference to what was apparently a subject of discussion amongst scholarly men at that time.

The facts relating to the point raised as a second query will be dealt with later in full.

On the third point, Bishop Short's letter is in itself confirmation that the University idea was not new when he wrote of it, as indeed how could it be with such men as the Rev. C. B. Howard, the Rev. Thomas Quentia Stow, the Rev. Ralph Drummond, and Dr. Wyatt setting the ideals of the new community from its very earliest beginnings? It would not be a far-fetched thought to suggest that these men—and others like-minded with them—had many a talk in regard to educational matters, from the most elementary to the highest, long before the realisation of their hopes was immediately possible.

Early Difficulties.

It is true that education may be regarded from points of view which do not bring the University into the picture at all, but it is certain that no view of systematised education can possibly be complete that excludes from it the operation of an institution whose whole purpose is to concentrate the best that is known in literature and the arts, the most exact in the things that have been tested in the realm of the sciences, and the most reasonable deductions that may be made from such research work as it undertakes. Many things vastly valuable to a country may be accomplished without a university, but the arch of education cannot be complete without the keystone which it alone supplies.

The history of the early days of the province shows that the stern compulsion of necessity forbade expenditure on some things which, in themselves highly desirable, were yet inexpedient to be attempted, and as State revenue or private benefaction are the sources from which a community may hope with reason to draw supplies for any nationally important purpose, the struggles of the earliest settlers being an open book that may be read of all men, who will reproach them if for the first 38 years of the State's existence they did not find it possible to give concrete expression to this one of their most cherished ideals?

The Source of the Movement.

The story of the founding of such an institution as a university must always contain some feature of interest which attaches peculiarly to itself and no other. History, more or less reliable in some cases, and tradition in others, surround some of these with an atmosphere of romance that is not too well understood in these matter-of-fact days, yet it may be questioned if any other similar event would exhibit the operation of a finer and more magnanimous spirit than that which led to the founding of the University of Adelaide at the time it was made possible to do so. Dismissing as untenable the suggestion that the examinations held in 1861, by the committee of which the Governor, Sir Richard MacDonnell, was chairman, was more than the expression of a sincere desire to foster and encourage any feasible scheme for intellectual culture, it may be said that the source of the movement which led ultimately to the establishment of the University of Adelaide may be traced to action that was definitely taken in 1871 by the Congregational, Baptist, and Presbyterian churches

at the instance of the former, for the establishment of a Theological College for the training of students for the ministry. Official records of the Congregational Union show that, following certain preliminary discussions at meetings of that body at the half-yearly meeting of the Union, held on October 26, 1871, it was resolved, on the motion of the Rev. F. W. Cox, seconded by the Rev. James Jefferis, LL.B., "That this meeting approves of the scheme to form a United Theological Institute, and begs the committee of the Union to take such steps as it may deem necessary to give it due effect." Subsequent discussions between official representatives of the three churches led to an agreement to support the scheme, and this was ratified at a joint meeting of the parties held on February 27, 1872.

An inaugural meeting to celebrate the commencement of the work of the Union College, as it was determined it should be called, was held in the exchange room of the Town Hall on May 30, 1872, under the chairmanship of the late Dr. Whittell, and arrangements were then made which led to the opening of the college on June 21 of that year, with a staff of professors, who undertook the following subjects:—

- Greek Testament, Rev. Silas Mead, M.A., LL.B.
- Mathematics and natural philosophy, Rev. James Jefferis, LL.B.
- English literature and mental and moral philosophy, Rev. John Davidson.
- Classes for the study of classics were under the tutorship of the Rev. Henry Read.

The Union College found its feet immediately, and the quality of the work undertaken by it made such an appeal to the sympathy of Sir Walter Watson Hughes—a wealthy Scottish pastoralist and mine-owner—that shortly afterwards that gentleman, in order to ensure its future stability, offered to endow it with a sum of £20,000. Sir Walter Hughes, being a member of the Presbyterian Church of which the Rev. James Lyall was minister, communicated his desire to the latter who, to his infinite credit, seeing the possibility of accomplishing a much bigger thing than the establishment of a theological college, suggested that the offered endowment should be devoted instead to the founding of a University. As the immediate result of this suggestion, the Council of Union College was communicated with, and after grave deliberation agreed that, in the interests of the province, the basis of the college should be altered and a University established in Adelaide. The next step in the momentous project was taken at a meeting of the College Council held on September 3, 1872, at which it was resolved, on the motion of the Rev. James Lyall, seconded by Mr. Charles Smedley, "That a committee be appointed to communicate with members of various religious bodies and others in reference to the formation of a university for the colony, apart from theological teaching, the committee to consist of the Revs. John Davidson, James Jefferis, and Silas Mead, and Messrs. David Fowler, Alexander Hay, and George Young."

No time was lost by this committee in getting to work, and on September 17 a large and representative meeting of interested persons met in the Union College rooms at Temple Chambers, Currie-street, to consider the proposals of the council. A report of the two following resolutions carried at that meeting was submitted to a meeting of the council on October 1, viz.:—

- "1. This meeting considers it desirable for the purpose of furthering liberal education in South Australia, that a University should be founded to furnish instruction in all the liberal arts and sciences, and to confer degrees in arts, law, and physics."
- "2. It is desirable that the said University shall have power to make statutes for the affiliation of any collegiate institution, irrespective of religious belief."

A University Association for the management of such business as had to be done in connection with the projected University prior to the passing of an Act of Parliament to provide for its government, was formed at the meeting already referred to, held on September 23, 1872, and from that time onward the Union College Council ceased to conduct the studies of students in literature and science.

The University of Adelaide Act was passed in 1874, the way having been made clear for a more extended course of studies than could have been provided under Sir Walter Hughes's gift of £20,000 by the equally generous gift of £20,000 from Sir Thomas Elder, another Scottish pastoralist and merchant, and also a member of the Presbyterian Church.

Remarkable Progress.

More extended reference than has been made to the University at this period of its existence is contained in the University calendar and other documents in the possession of the University authorities, but as the facts related do not seem to have been published hitherto in a co-ordinated form, they are recorded as necessary to supply the information on this point which may be regarded as cogent to the case.

The growth of the University from the small things of May 21st, 1873—the day on which Sir Walter Watson Hughes made available the sum of £20,000 as a University endowment fund—to the truly remarkable progress registered in the University calendar for the year 1925 is a story which must be told in a different connection. Suffice it to say here that the two chairs established under the provision made by the original endowment

had increased in the latter year to nineteen, with a teaching staff of 95 lecturers, demonstrators, and tutors, and the eight matriculated students and 82 non-graduating students, who attended lectures at the opening of the University classes in March, 1876, had increased in 1925 to 761 matriculated students in the Faculties of Arts, Law, Medicine, Music, Dentistry, Science, and Engineering, 676 non-graduating students, 78 post graduate students, and a further 632 students at the Elder Conservatorium of Music.

Endowments.

Financial records are usually soulless statements of debits and credits which neither arouse enthusiasm nor excite admiration; but in the list of endowments and benefactions published in the University calendar there is an element which transforms mere figures into symbols of great-hearted generosity and sacrifice, of a value beyond computation.

Amongst these are many which represent affectionate memories of persons, and purposeful sacrifices for cherished ideals; and in them, apart from the money values—without which the University could not fulfil the intention of its founders—it is infinitely rich in the things which establish a nation. The sum of the University endowments from all sources approximates to £400,000, and the revenue which in 1875 was £4,818 7/11, has grown, as reported in the University calendar for 1925, to over £80,000. Of the latter sum Government grants account for close on £43,000, and students' fees to close on £22,000.

The Question of Site.

The area of land available for University purposes is unfortunately too small to be regarded without apprehension of difficulties which occur with every Pullerine gave an interesting illustrated lecture on a trip to an aboriginal camp though the 4½ acres allotted originally have been added to the extent of some 3½ acres more, it is realised that eventually a greater area of land will be necessary to meet the demands of future generations about the creation, by the council, of an appointments board, which was now a going concern. Other movements in the House of Assembly on August 27, 1919, which was seconded by Mr. Angus Parsons, an ex-Minister of Education, and now a member of the Supreme Court Bench, to the following effect:—"That, in view of the contemplated erection of a new mental hospital at Enfield, it be determined that the site of the present buildings and grounds at Parkside be definitely secured for the future use of the Adelaide University." The Government of the day of which the Hon. A. H. Peake was Premier and Minister of Education, supported the proposal, and the motion being carried, provision was thus made for a future need which every year makes more apparent. The area that will thus be made available, comprises 125 acres in close proximity to the south-eastern boundary of the city. In addition to these areas, the magnificent gift of the late Mr. Peter Waite of the Netherby and Urrbrae estates, comprising some 300 acres of land, and extensive and easily adaptable buildings, within two miles of Adelaide, for University agricultural research work, puts the University of Adelaide in a most happy position to face the future with confidence.

It would not be seemly in such a record as this purports to be to introduce any views which may be the subject of controversy; and yet one surely may express the hope that, as the time is at hand when Sir Langdon Bonython's munificent gift of £40,000 for the provision of a University Great Hall will be available, questions involving the immediate extension of buildings should now be grappled with, and a site worthy of the project be secured. It is not out of place in such a record as this, to express the feeling of pride with which South Australians regard an institution which, from its very inception, has had associated with it in its government and on its teaching staff, men who have brought it both distinction and honor. The fact that its degree rank with those of the foremost Universities in the world is no less a tribute to the quality of the teaching imparted than it is to the high character and ability of the men who have rendered such splendid service. Some of these have added world-wide distinction to that which their work at the University of Adelaide gained for them, and in their fame the home of their earlier achievements claims both an interest and an honor.

There are two important features in the policy of the University of Adelaide which mark it for distinction:—

1. It had been determined before the Royal Charter which enabled it to confer degrees was granted, that women should have equal rights with men in all graduate courses; and in consequence of this, when the charter was issued, the University of Adelaide was the first in Australia, and amongst the earliest in the world, to confer degrees on graduates of either sex.
2. By virtue of a condition governing the gift of £20,000 by Sir Thomas Elder, students in training for the teaching service of the State are entitled to attend University classes on the subjects in which they must qualify, free of all cost for fees.

Address by Professor Hancock.

The annual meeting of the Graduates' Association of the University of Adelaide was held at the Prince of Wales lecture room on Friday evening. Mr. C. T. Madigan (Vice-President) occupied the chair, and there was a fair attendance.

Union and War Memorial.

The Chairman presented the annual report, which stated that much time and consideration had been devoted to the question of the proposed students' union and war memorial building. There had been much difficulty in securing from the Government the transfer of a site for the buildings, and that uncertainty had hampered the project for the last five years. However, there was every reason to expect that during the present session of Parliament the legal transfer of at least portion of the land recently occupied by the Royal Agricultural Society would be accomplished. The committee had at last been able to induce the University council to sanction the election of a committee with full powers to assume responsibility and proceed with the union and war memorial undertaking. The new committee would consist of three members each of the council and the staff, the Registrar, two members each of the students' council, the sports association, and the Graduates' Association, and one each from the Women's Union and Women's Graduates' Union. At the luncheon held in December to welcome new graduates they had the largest attendance on record, and the association had benefited by the enrolment of a number of new members. At a general meeting in March Dr. R. H. Pullerine gave an interesting illustrated lecture on a trip to an aboriginal camp though the 4½ acres allotted originally have been added to the extent of some 3½ acres more, it is realised that eventually a greater area of land will be necessary to meet the demands of future generations about the creation, by the council, of an appointments board, which was now a going concern. Other movements in the House of Assembly on August 27, 1919, which was seconded by Mr. Angus Parsons, an ex-Minister of Education, and now a member of the Supreme Court Bench, to the following effect:—"That, in view of the contemplated erection of a new mental hospital at Enfield, it be determined that the site of the present buildings and grounds at Parkside be definitely secured for the future use of the Adelaide University." The Government of the day of which the Hon. A. H. Peake was Premier and Minister of Education, supported the proposal, and the motion being carried, provision was thus made for a future need which every year makes more apparent. The area that will thus be made available, comprises 125 acres in close proximity to the south-eastern boundary of the city. In addition to these areas, the magnificent gift of the late Mr. Peter Waite of the Netherby and Urrbrae estates, comprising some 300 acres of land, and extensive and easily adaptable buildings, within two miles of Adelaide, for University agricultural research work, puts the University of Adelaide in a most happy position to face the future with confidence.

Election of Officers.

The following officers were elected for the ensuing year:—President, Mr. E. W. Holden; Vice-President, Mr. C. T. Madigan; Treasurer, Mr. A. G. Price; Committee, Dr. Helen Mayo, Mrs. J. C. McKellar, Professors, A. L. Campbell and McKellar Stewart, Messrs. S. Talbot Smith, F. M. Burgess, and F. W. Eardley, representatives on the committee to proceed with the project of the students' union and war memorial building, Messrs. Madigan and Price.

"National Characteristics."

Professor W. K. Hancock, in an entertaining and informative talk on "National characteristics," took a number of representative types of English and American tourists for the purpose of illustration and revealed his powers of observation when travelling in different countries and studying people. He depicted the Philistine type by citing the case of an American woman who recalled a visit to Brussels, by describing it as "the place where the tyre of her motor car had been mended." That type, however, was not peculiar to America. There was the "booster" who evidently found satisfaction in gazing upon an historic building abroad and observing that in his city there was a bigger chewing gum factory. There was the collector type, with his inevitable "Have you seen this?" or "Have you been to that?" and when he found that he had "put one up" on his friends he went off in search of fresh discoveries. The yearning type was the person who lapsed into a flabby, sentimental state about things that he might, or might not, have seriously liked. He got vague, woolly terms, and wrapped himself round one like a moist heat wave. On the whole Englishmen made a better showing when they went abroad, because taste and money went a bit more together in their country than in America, where every one was more or less a millionaire. They were not "boosters," and that was probably why they were unpopular, because their attitude gave foreigners the impression that they considered themselves superior. The American regarded the Englishman as a person of almost ungodly restraint. While his attitude to life was tinged with irony, the American was oozing with sentiment which the Englishman regarded as flabby and "sob stuff." The Englishman was regarded as too sensitive because he considered it vulgar to laugh over loudly, and, while he remained an individualist, the American preferred to be "one of the crowd." He mentioned some of the dominant traits of the governing English typified by Oxford men. Oxford was a curious mixture of aristocracy and democracy; it was a much more democratic place than the city of Adelaide. They manifested traits without tradition; they loved liberty. They had balance, and would not, for example, allow the national currency to fall as it had done in France and Germany, and, although it had been said that England was done, the English man would not acknowledge deterioration in national characteristics. The humorous illustrations employed by the speaker provoked much laughter.

The hearty thanks of the meeting were conveyed to Professor Hancock. At the close of the proceedings refreshments were served in the north hall of the Conservatorium.

At the annual meeting of the Graduates' Association of the University of Adelaide, on Friday evening, Mr. E. W. Holden, B.Sc., was unanimously elected President.