

In 1883 Sir Thomas Elder presented £10,000 as an endowment towards a medical school, and in 1884 the Hon. J. H. Angus gave £6,000 for the endowment of a Chair of Chemistry. Steps were at once taken to establish a school of medicine, but the council found it impossible to provide for more than the first two of the course of five years. The inauguration of the school was such a pronounced success that the council proceeded to consider ways and means of providing the complete curriculum. At this period there was a travelling scholarship, provided by the Government, and known as the South Australian Scholarship. It was of the value of £200 per annum, and tenable for four years, open to graduates only, and the scholar was required to proceed to England and there continue a further course of study. As this scholarship only benefitted one individual every four years, and as the scholar invariably accepted some appointment at home or abroad, upon completion of the tenure instead of returning to South Australia, it occurred to the council that if the £800 per annum were transferred to the medical school it would enable them to provide the full course.

There had been some mention of the probable discontinuance of the scholarship, so the Government was approached and readily agreed to the transfer. Notice of the discontinuance of the scholarship was given, and it was agreed as each scholarship lapsed that the £200 so set free should be paid to the University, and subsequently the full £800 per annum.

Naturally there was jubilation when it became known that the medicals would not have to go elsewhere to graduate but would be able to do so at home.

The full five years curriculum was provided, a full staff of lecturers appointed, and all was well, but alas, before the period arrived on which the full amount of the scholarship fund accrued the council received an intimation that the payment of these moneys would cease on a given date. This was a bombshell which almost shattered the school, but that munificent benefactor, Sir Thomas Elder, came to the rescue and assisted the council to meet its obligations for a time. Fortunately, with this help, the increase in fees in consequence of additional students, and other income, there was no setback and the school has prospered.

It is interesting to note that when the establishment of the school was mooted, that section of the press which has been quoted in connection with the Law School, made the following comment:—"The University has formally adopted the regulations concerning the Medical School of the University. This means in other words, that there is now to be a regular school of medicine in Adelaide in connection with the University. We cannot but think that this is much to be regretted. Australia might well rest content with the schools of medicine at Melbourne and Sydney."

After further comment it continued:—"On the whole the arguments in favour of the establishment of a school at this time are few and very far between. The school is not now required—that is the main point against it."

This was somewhat refreshing seeing that the same paper previously advocated a school of medicine in preference to law. One, however, accepts the comments as honest opinions at that time, for in 1885 the University had still but a small number of students and funds were not plentiful.

Another newspaper, fortunately long since dead, was spitefully unkind in its criticisms. It stated that "the University was born long before its due time. There was no necessity for it in the first place, and it has cost more money than it is worth, or ever will be worth. Now the authorities want to establish a third rate medical school." The writer of those lines would, were he here now, no doubt be prepared to eat his words and apologise to the council.

Music.

The school of music which was established prior to that of medicine met with approval from its inception and from time to time was very favourably commented upon by the press. An article giving the history of this school appeared in The Register of April 29:—"As the years passed endowments increased and rapid extensions followed. The Government, too, recognising the growing importance of the University and the asset it was to the State, very generously came to its assistance with additional grants of money and land and help in regard to buildings. The splendid block recently completed, in which the departments of engineering and physics are housed, is an earnest of legislative recognition of the wonderful expansion of the University and the ever-increasing demands of the people for education."

Helps to Progress.

Two factors have undoubtedly had a very direct influence in regard to University extension, and full recognition of its value and potentialities, viz., the organic union of the University with the School of Mines in connection with the engineering course, and legislative representation on the council. Forces have been co-ordinated, the effect of co-operation has been all to the good, and the community is reaping the benefit.

Like a small sum of money invested and allowed to accumulate at compound interest for many years until it has grown to a handsome sum, so the University from its modest beginning, with its one room, 13 students, and staff of four teachers, has increased in value, demonstrated the soundness of the original investment, and justified the foresight and faith of its sponsors.

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