

EDUCATION FOR THE MASSES

Agriculture may be the backbone of a country, but trade and commerce are its lifeblood. No nation can live in isolation. It must barter and trade with others. This is the price that must be paid for present-day civilisation.

Russia, a union of socialist republics, does not hold with commerce, for commerce connotes capital. If, however, exists as a State monopoly, China every now and again boycotts British goods, but obtains similar goods from Japan or the United States. Even the Australian aborigine practices elementary or primitive trade when he barter his boomerang for tobacco, food, or coin.

Industry, commerce, and agriculture are as important factors today as chivalry, warfare, religion, and classical learning were in the past. It is upon that truism that preparation must be based for active participation in the affairs of the world, the nation, and the State.

It is a waste of time to teach future farmers to read Virgil, Horace, Cicero, or Caesar in the original. This has been recognised, and the language and literature of a dead people are no longer crammed into young brains.

The mechanic of the future does not need to be versed in botany, nor the commercial man in astronomy. School curricula will soon include only subjects which are absolutely essential. They will provide the foundation of an education more in keeping with the times. Specialisation will follow, and the higher colleges and universities must cater for it.

As at present constituted Adelaide University, with its faculties of arts, law, and medicine, equips a small minority for these professions. The vast majority of the people will not become teachers or professors, lawyers, or doctors. They will become agriculturists, industrialists, or traders. Advanced education is as important to them as to any other class of people. The University must serve their interests, too.

The establishment of a Chair of Commerce has been mooted. A Chair of Agriculture is likewise needed. With these the University will be enabled to supply an education that will meet the claims of the greatest number.

It is education of the right type that will make the people and State of South Australia prosperous. Mark Twain endeavored to show what education can and will do when he said "a cauliflower is only a cabbage with a college education."

South Australia wants all its people to have a sound, practical, elementary education. Facilities should then be provided at continuation schools. It is one to add to this solid foundation by study in special

...diseases for growing cereals or other similar products, the cost of facilities such as railways, roads, and water supply necessary to develop the area, and the proportion of cost of these facilities which should be a charge upon the land. This would provide for the steady and continuous development of their unutilised Crown lands.

Improved Methods.

The second method of increasing production, namely, increasing the average yield per acre, could only be done by improving the methods of farming. It was true that in all districts there were in wide areas where these methods would be difficult to improve upon existing circumstances, but it was also true that there were very many farmers who lagged behind, much to the detriment of total rural production. It was the earnest wish of the Government that the latter should be assisted and encouraged to bring their practice up to the level of their more progressive and successful neighbors. A comprehensive policy of agricultural education and research would be adopted, the ultimate influence of which would be felt on every farm throughout the State.

Experiment Plots.

The Department of Agriculture would be strengthened in personnel and adequately supplied with funds for the educational and propaganda work. A careful consideration of the position of instruction in general agriculture showed that the districts served by the district agricultural instructors were too large and unwieldy for efficient work. There was an increasing demand throughout the State for the establishment of experiment plots on private farms, and hitherto no work had been carried out under the supervision of the district instructors. The influence of this work on improved practice was very marked, but its supervision encroached unduly upon the time of the instructors. This control of this important work would be entrusted to a supervisor who would be appointed to two field officers. The work of the district agricultural instructors would be strictly confined to instruction and propaganda work. The ideal to be aimed at would be that instructors should visit and be intimately acquainted with the farms of their districts, and systematically record important data concerning the farms visited. This data would include area of holding, area cleared, area used, seed per acre used, super per acre used, best condition of crop, crop yields, conditions of fallow, labour employed, and whether labor is required.

District Instructors.

The reports of the district instructors would eventually supply valuable material regarding the progress of rural production on individual farms. The control and organization of the work of these district instructors would be in the hands of the chief agricultural instructor (Mr. and Mrs. J. Spaldron), under the direction of the present director of agricultural instruction, with centres as follow:—1. Central District—Adelaide. 2. Lower North District—Riverton. 3. Lower North District—Murray Bridge. 4. Upper North District—Murray Bridge. 5. South-Eastern District—Mount Gambier. 6. Lower Eyre Peninsula District—Port Lincoln. 7. Upper Eyre Peninsula District—Stirling.

It was realised that these districts were still too large, but as specifically would the area of the districts be reduced, the improvement of all branches of agriculture, the improvement of new and more profitable varieties of crops, the rational use of fertilizers, the improvement of cultural and tillage practices, the rational use of tillage and fungoid pests. The Government realised that agricultural education and agricultural research must be given a progressive scheme for rural development already in former applying the knowledge already gained from the elucidation of the new facts which would form the basis of the progress. The foundations of a future prosperity would be laid by the liberal encouragement of agricultural research.

The Waite Institute.

They therefore proposed to make provision for the steady and continuous development of rural research at the Waite Institute by raising a financial map to extend the investigational work of the Agricultural Research Institute, had devoted its attention to the study of problems underlying cereal culture and the improvement of pastures, the production of the soils of the State and the Cassiaras, and the investigation of certain diseases of the State. The Government proposed to assist the institute financially to develop these researches and to take the area devoted to the lines of investigation and field experiments at the Waite Institute would be enlarged. Where breeding investigation would be extended with distant varieties. The annual losses due to the ravages of plant diseases in South

Australia amounted to several millions bushels. Investigations would be directed to the discovery of improved methods of controlling these diseases. The important chemical and soil problems associated with the irrigation areas along the Murray and River would receive special attention. A division of entomology would be attached to the Waite Institute to furnish the Department of Agriculture on insect pests and to conduct investigations on the looper flea and other serious pests of farm crops. The Waite Institute would work in close cooperation with the Department of Agriculture in an endeavor to increase efficiency in farming, and increase the output from agriculture.

Training of Specialists.

The Government also proposes in connection with their policy for agricultural education and research to encourage the training of agricultural scientists and specialists in agriculture by ensuring a course for young men who took up a course in agricultural science. It is proposed that they should be compelled to find service in other States of the Commonwealth. The Government proposed to encourage agricultural research in agricultural science and agriculture for four or five years in the Departments of Agriculture, Education, and Irrigation. The best method of securing a permanent increase in output from the land was to improve the farming methods and apply the teachings of science to every branch of production. This work required a body of trained agricultural scientists who could engage in research work and attack new problems, and others to apply existing knowledge to old problems and to show how the adoption of improved farming methods inevitably increased the output per acre. The trained men thus recruited to the Department of Agriculture would ultimately have a material influence in improving the farming methods of the State and advancing the prosperity. In order to provide for continuous development, and to place agricultural education and research on a sound basis, the Government proposed to introduce a Bill to provide for its requirements for a period of 10 years.

Credit Facilities.

The question of providing better facilities for farmers in developing their holdings would be considered. Measures would be submitted to Parliament to place the dairying industry on a sound basis by providing a system of inspection upon the farms to the factory. It was proposed to introduce legislation to ensure the breeding of animals free from hereditary unsoundness, and to prevent the dumping of rejected stallions from other States into South Australia. Assistance would be given by the Government to breeders who wished to improve their stock by importation of superior animals from abroad. An important item of Government policy would be the appointment of a permanent Agricultural Board to take stock of all Crown lands suitable for settlement, to report to Parliament the number of persons that could be settled on a specified area, its suitability for growing primary products, the cost of the facilities to develop it, e.g., railways, roads, and water supply. This work would be done by the Director downwards, for the necessary machinery for the determination of suitable areas for settlement and the steps to be taken to systematically develop such areas.

Co-operation Needed.

The Premier added that the Minister of Agriculture (Hon. J. Cowan) was optimistic regarding the effect of the policy outlined. Every member of the department, from the Director downwards, was most enthusiastic. To use their own words, they were "after that 50,000,000 bushel harvest." This Railway Commission had been promised to assist in the greater production campaign. "Knowing production of new and more profitable varieties of crops, the rational use of fertilizers, the improvement of cultural and tillage practices, the rational use of tillage and fungoid pests. The Government realised that agricultural education and agricultural research must be given a progressive scheme for rural development already in former applying the knowledge already gained from the elucidation of the new facts which would form the basis of the progress. The foundations of a future prosperity would be laid by the liberal encouragement of agricultural research.

NEWS 12-7-27

ADV. 12-7-27

AGRICULTURAL POLICY.

NEW GOVERNMENT SCHEME.

EFFORTS TO INCREASE PRODUCTION.

APPOINTMENT OF PERMANENT BOARD.

Under the new agricultural policy of the Government the area devoted to agriculture is to be extended, and by improved methods it is hoped that the average yield per acre will be increased.

The Premier (Hon. R. L. Butler) stated yesterday that the Government had been giving close consideration to the agricultural policy as outlined in his policy speech.

This policy was based upon the principle that since for its economic prosperity South Australia was almost wholly dependent upon its rural industries, it was incumbent upon the Government to foster and stimulate these industries by all means in its power. There were two ways of speeding up production, namely, increasing the area devoted to agriculture, and increasing the average yield per acre. The increase in acreage under crop required additional settlers, increased transport of water, supplies, and the opening up of additional Crown lands. The Government proposed to appoint a permanent board to take stock of all Crown lands suitable for settlement, and to report to Parliament on the number of persons who could be settled on a specified area, its

MR. W. R. BIRKS

...principal of Roseworthy Agricultural College, who arrived from Melbourne by the express this morning to take up his duties.

ADV. 12-7-27

Mr. W. R. Birks, who was appointed principal of Roseworthy Agricultural College from Melbourne to-day to take up his duties.

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Mr. M. Kingsley Lowcock, M.S., myeloid for the Commonwealth Government, who spent some time in America for the past two years doing research work in connection with the poultry pest, has been granted an extension of leave months to continue