

Sir George said that the principal purpose of their visit to South Australia was to attend the opening of the John Melrose laboratory. It was intended, also, to hold executive meetings in this State during their stay.

Matters to be considered at the meetings included many of importance in connection with the development of the research work of the council, and particularly certain matters in train between the council and the Waite Agricultural Research Institute.

"The council is definitely interested in the institute, which is doing important work for us," said Sir George. He added that the meetings would occupy probably most of tomorrow and Wednesday.

The party will inspect the nutrition laboratory, under Prof. T. Brailsford Robertson (Professor of Physiology at Adelaide University), before leaving on the return journey to Sydney on Wednesday afternoon.

N.E.S. 22-4-29

AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH

Laboratory Opened at Waite Institute

GENEROSITY OF SIR JOHN MELROSE

In the presence of a large attendance this afternoon His Excellency Sir Alexander Hore-Ruthven, V.C., officially opened the John Melrose Laboratory, attached to Waite Agricultural Research Institute.

Waite Agricultural Research Institute was established as a result of the gift of the late Mr. Peter Waite to the University of Adelaide for the purpose of fostering education and research in agriculture and allied subjects. The endowment comprised the Urrbrae, Claremont, and Netherby estates, consisting of 299 acres of agricultural and grazing land at Glen Osmond, and trust fund of £58,450.

A large portion of the estate comprised wheat land 280 ft. above sea level, while the remainder is representative of the hilly country at the foot of Mount Lofty Ranges. The University Council decided that the best means of giving effect to the wishes of the donor would be to establish an agricultural research institute and endeavor to enlarge the stock of scientific knowledge relating to rural pursuits, and pass it on to those engaged in production as farmers and pastoralists.

The active work of the institute began in March, 1925. The initial task was the gradual conversion of the estate into a modern research station. As the funds available were not sufficient to erect and equip the necessary permanent buildings, laboratories were improvised in the existing buildings on the estate.

PERMANENT BUILDINGS

Through the generosity of Sir John Melrose, of Ulooloo, who in 1927 gave £10,000 to the University for the building of a chemical laboratory, and with the assistance of the Empire Marketing Board and the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, the University was able to construct the first group of permanent laboratories for the institute.

The foundation stone of the John Melrose Laboratory was laid by Miss Lily M. Melrose, daughter of the donor, on January 26, 1928, and the building was completed in February last.

In December, 1927, the South Australian Parliament passed the Agricultural Education Act, which provided for an appropriation for 10 years to the University for the development of agricultural research at the Waite Institute. Under the terms of the Act the University has to maintain a School of Agricultural Science of degree standard and provide for advisory services to the Department of Agriculture in plant pathology and entomology. The appropriation provided £5,000 for the year ended June 30, 1927, and the amount increases gradually to £15,000 in 1937.

SPACIOUS STRUCTURES

The John Melrose Laboratory forms the south central wing of the laboratory buildings designed for the accommodation of the research staff of the institute. The building includes the central block which holds the entrance hall and staircase, and a basement which will eventually be extended as a special feature of the projected north central wing.

It contains two main floors—ground, devoted to administrative and botanical work, and first, primarily for chemical work, but affording accommodation for entomology.

The entire content of the building is approximately 274,000 cubic ft., and the total floor space 14,700 square ft.

Approximate expenditure has been:—Construction, £15,300; joinery fittings and laboratory benches, £2,200; electric installation, £742; ventilation for fume hoods, £604; dehydrator and steam plant, £466.

RECEIVED BY CHANCELLOR

Professors of Adelaide University and many guests were present when the Governor declared the laboratory open.

His Excellency was received by Sir George Murray (Chancellor), who made the introductory speech. The Governor then addressed those present and declared the building open.

A vote of thanks to Sir John Melrose for his munificent gift was moved by the Hon. R. L. Butler (Premier), and responded to by Sir John.

The Premier said that he desired to express, on behalf of the Government and the people of this State, deep appreciation of the generosity of Sir John Melrose in giving £10,000 toward the cost of such a magnificent building—magnificent principally because of the benefits which must ultimately accrue to primary production in the State. Generous as the gift was, it was the spirit which prompted it that won their admiration and deserved their thanks.

The desire of Sir John undoubtedly was not only to help South Australia, but the Commonwealth, and he could not have done it in a more fitting manner. After all, the scientific researches, investigations, and experiments which would be conducted in the laboratories would not only directly benefit the primary producer, making his lot easier and his work more profitable, but, perhaps, what was more important still, by the application of science to agriculture (and he used the term in its widest sense) the people could be supplied with their daily bread at a lower cost.

A visit to the Waite Institute always acted as a tonic. It was a cure for pessimism, and brought the realisation that agriculture in South Australia was at last coming into its own. It gave abundant confidence in the future.

Sir George Julius (chairman of the Commonwealth Council for Scientific and Industrial Research) also spoke.

WELL-EQUIPPED INSTITUTION

In proposing a vote of thanks to His Excellency the Hon. J. Cowan (Minister of Agriculture) said that South Australia had been particularly fortunate in those who had been selected to represent the King in the State. Since his arrival the Governor had identified himself with every phase of social and community life, and had traversed a great portion of South Australia.

Waite Agricultural Research Institute had already proved of great value to the people of the State, and by the addition of the John Melrose laboratory it would rank as one of the best-equipped institutions of its kind in the world.

As Minister of Agriculture Mr. Cowan said that he realised that the work of the research institute had been made possible by the generosity of such public-spirited men as the late Mr. Peter Waite and Sir John Melrose, worthy representatives of the pioneers, to whom South Australia owed so much.

South Australia was essentially an agricultural country, and for many years its progress and prosperity would depend chiefly on the development of the great primary industries. He was sure that South Australian farmers would be prepared to follow the advice of the experts of the research institute.

If by the adoption of more scientific methods, the judicious use of superphosphates for topdressing natural pastures, and the cultivation of subterranean clover, production could be increased, the stock-carrying capacity of the land improved, and the bounds of settlement extended, a great thing for the State as a whole would be done.

Afternoon tea was served at the residence of Dr. A. E. V. Richardson (director).