

Register, Sep. 30/11

THE UNIVERSITY.

The letter of a correspondent in The Register to-day raises the interesting question of the "democratic" constitution of the Adelaide University, which seems to carry the Referendum principle to extremes. The names, and the functions, of governing bodies vary so greatly in different seats of learning that it is easy to confuse "Council" with "Senate." In Adelaide the latter consists of the whole body of graduates, although they are not allowed a vote for three years after taking a degree. That restriction has been borrowed from the British universities, where the status of a Bachelor is regarded as one merely of transition. The executive body (often called "Senate" elsewhere) is here styled a Council. It consists of 21 members, elected periodically by the Senate—not necessarily from among the graduates themselves. The point under immediate discussion is the clause in the University Act which declares that "no new statute or regulation, or alteration or repeal of any existing statute, shall be of any force until approved by the said Senate." The distinction between Statute and Regulation appears to be arbitrary. The University Calendar shows that (for example) non-graduating students are dealt with under the former, while the latter covers all the machinery connected with earning a degree. However, an alteration in either is of no force until approved by the Senate, and that body is called together to consider trifles which might well be taken for granted. For consideration at the recent meeting was a proposal to add to certain instruments specified in the course for Bachelor of Music, "or any other instrument approved by the Faculty." If Parliament found that an Act forbidding adulteration of tea and coffee had somehow omitted cocoa, and that word were inserted by amendment, how many electors would turn out to vote at a referendum on the question? Similarly, the Senate is apt to let its consent be taken for granted, and a failure to attend and vote is a sign of satisfaction rather than of apathy.

Everything connected with the University, from its site to its income, is under discussion just now. The one thing certain is that Parliament, in return for an increased grant, will require some representation on the Council. This does not imply distrust, and the Council itself has already welcomed the idea. Still, by comparison with the life-election in Sydney, and some others of the older institutions, the executive body of the Adelaide University has always been recruited in a liberal fashion. Each member has to stand for re-election every fourth year. The present personnel consists of a Judge (the Chief Justice) as Chancellor, and several professors, doctors, lawyers, schoolmasters, merchants, and minis-

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MUSICAL EXAMINATIONS.

The Senate of the University of Queensland has decided to take part in the joint scheme of the Universities of Melbourne and Adelaide for the conduct of musical examinations. Arrangements are being made for the holding of examinations in the theory and practice of music throughout Queensland, under the control of a joint board appointed by the Adelaide, Melbourne, and Queensland Universities.

ters of religion. Of these last, the Act declares rather arbitrarily that there must never be more than four at any one time! A previous membership of the graduate ranks is not insisted on, and the presence of men of affairs greatly strengthens the financial side. Further, it is understood that—with the possible exception of the veteran benefactor, Mr. Barr Smith—there are no nominations by way of mere compliment, as the members are expected to be keen and regular in attendance. The Director of Education is already a member, voluntarily appointed by the Senate, and it seems only right that the Treasurer should be represented, either in person or by deputy. One may hope, however, that politics will never be allowed to affect the future of an institution so valuable, and so free hitherto from party influence. It has been said that on similar bodies experience counts for so much that a new member needs at least a year before he can be of real service; and there is a prospect of well-meant effort without any adequate result, if membership of the University Council is regarded as a sop for restless or discontented followers of any Parliamentary party.

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CRESWELL SCHOLARSHIPS.

At the meeting of the South Australian Cricket Association on Friday evening reference was made to the founding of scholarships at the Adelaide University as a memorial to the late Mr. John Creswell. The President (Sir Edwin Smith) said they had the Creswell Gardens adjacent to the Adelaide Oval, that the Cricket Association had commissioned Mr. G. Webb (the well-known artist) to execute an oil painting of their late secretary, and that Creswell scholarships were also to be founded at the University to perpetuate the memory of one who had done so much good work in their midst. Mr. S. Talbot Smith stated that £1,200 had been raised by public subscriptions, and that so soon as the amount reached £1,300 the University would issue four scholarships each year, tenable for four years, for the diploma of commerce. The University had agreed to give 5 per cent. (which was more than usual) on the fund, which would provide £65 per year. There would be four scholarships the first year, and from the fourth year there would be 16 scholarships available. The committee had expressed the hope that the University, or the donors of the scholarships, would see their way clear to nominate deserving boys who would not otherwise be able to have the advantage of a University career. The scholarships would perpetuate the memory of their late friend. Sir Edwin Smith said the necessary amount for the creation of the scholarships was almost in hand, and as Chairman he would take care to see that the £1,300 was made up and that the University would be reminded that the scholarships should be issued this year. The intimation was greeted with cheers.

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THE UNIVERSITY SENATE.

From "One of the 14."—"As the mere intimation in The Register that the University Senate had failed to make a quorum may—though literally correct—give a wrong idea to the public, at a time when the University is very much in the public eye, a word of explanation would not be out of place. The Senate—that is, all the graduates of over three years' standing—have the power; but the Council—a body of 21, elected by the Senate—do the work. So democratic is the constitution that every change in a representative has to be referred back to the senate for ultimate approval. All members have full particulars sent to them of any changes passed by the council, and if only 14 turned up at the meeting on Thursday—the quorum has been fixed by the University Act at the high number of 20—it is not a sign of negligence or apathy, but simply the surest proof that the work done by the representatives (the Council) meets with the approval of the constituents (the Senate)."

THE GLACIAL CONTROVERSY.

To the Editor.

Sir—Dr. Basedow's so-called reply in The Register of September 19 is chiefly remarkable for the absence of any real facts connected with the question of the glacial origin of certain beds occurring in the Cambrian series of South Australia. He airs his views on "Theoretical Geology," attacks an opinion of mine, which has no bearing at all on the problem under discussion, and tells us a good deal about himself and his wonderful achievements; but little about the point at issue. As Mr. Howchin has already fully replied to Dr. Basedow in The Register of September 21, there hardly remains anything for me to say; in fact, I would not have replied at all if it were not necessary to correct some erroneous statements made by Dr. Basedow. The publication of Dr. Basedow's paper has been declined by two learned societies—the Royal Society of South Australia and the Geological Society of London—not because of any personal animosity, as Dr. Basedow wishes the public to believe (see page 358 of his German paper), but because of its character from a scientific standpoint. All this is an old story, and well known, but when Dr. Basedow says—"Having been elected a fellow of the Geological Society in Berlin, I was asked to embody my views in a general geological paper and read it at one of their meetings, and I did so." This statement is greatly at variance with the contents of an official letter from one of the secretaries of the German Geological Society, who, under the instructions of the board, writes under date June 27, 1910, to me as follows:—

Dear Sir—I have just received your letter of May 23, and I sent your manuscript at once to the press in order to have it published in our monthly bulletin for June (i.e., a reply of mine to some of Dr. Basedow's unfounded statements). We are very much obliged to you for your criticism of Mr. Basedow's paper. We fully understand your annoyance at Mr. Basedow's attacks. We have also good reason for complaint, because Mr. Basedow has not quite correctly acted towards the society. Mr. Basedow's paper was only accepted by the society because it had been warmly recommended by the gentleman under whose guidance Mr. Basedow has studied. Mr. Basedow obtained his degree of Ph.D., using the second part of the paper as his thesis. Moreover, he did not inform us of this fact. Had it been known to us that his paper was to be nothing but a thesis we would have considered it with a great deal more criticism, notwithstanding the good recommendations. It contained such attacks on Mr. Howchin that we were obliged to cut them out at once, refusing to publish them. . . . The council had great hesitation from the very beginning as to the scientific value of Mr. Basedow's paper, but we published it, simply because of the strong recommendation which accompanied the paper, in which it was stated to be of remarkable value. . . . (Signed) R. Baerling.

I am perfectly willing to let anybody see the original in order to convince himself that the above is a correct, literal translation. This official letter is almost sufficient to prove that Dr. Basedow was not asked by the council of the German Geological Society to "embody his views in a general geological paper," but that it was sent to the society without their asking him, and that, notwithstanding the doubt the council had regarding its scientific value, it was only published because of the recommendation of the gentleman, Professor Dr. Freeh, in Breslau, for whom the council had the greatest regard. Professor Freeh is a personal friend of mine, and I am corresponding with him almost every month. The specimens I collected while examining the Cambrian glacial beds are already on their way to Germany, and I will not fail to publish Professor Freeh's views thereon. I have not the slightest hesitation in saying that he, as well as other experienced glacialists, who will now have an opportunity of studying unquestionable evidence, will pronounce in favour of the glacial origin of these beds. I embodied my own observations, fully illustrated by photos, taken by myself, in a comprehensive paper, which will shortly be published in the leading German journal, The Neue Jahrbuch fuer Mineralogie, Geologie, und Palaeontologie. Dr. Basedow, in his German paper, dwells at great length on some features in the beds below and above the glacial till, which nobody ever doubted, but carefully refrains from discussing the evidence of the glacial beds themselves. If, as Dr. Basedow states, he made a thorough examination of the beds in the Sturt Valley, he has kept the result of this examination to himself, because all he has to say about it is embodied in 10 lines on page 363 of his paper. On the other hand he devotes some 24 pages to the discussion of the Tapley Hill slates, and almost more to the discussion of the older quartzites. But he either carefully refrains to say, or he has not observed it, that his so-called "floater" in the railway cutting near Blackwood extends across the line into the southern slope, where it is connected with a bed of quartzite, thus proving beyond doubt that it is not a floater at all, but the position of a bed of quartzite which became unfolded in the hill, and was cut through by the railway excavation.

I must decline to reply to personalities. I will also refrain from giving quotations from the severe criticism that Dr. Basedow's paper on the Tasmanian skulls but