

Register, March 18<sup>th</sup>, 1911.

## UNIVERSITY COMMISSION.

### Chancellor and Professors Examined.

### Question of Trades and Labour Representatives.

### ENGINEERING AND AGRICULTURE.

The University Commission met at Parliament House on Friday morning, and examined the Chancellor of the University (the Right Hon. Sir Samuel Way), Professors Chapman and Mitchell, and the Registrar (Mr. C. R. Hodge). There were present the Chairman (Mr. Ryan, M.P.), the Minister of Education (Hon. F. W. Conybeare), the Hons. A. H. Peake, M.P., A. W. Styles, M.L.C., and J. Cowan, M.L.C., and Messrs. Young and Green, M.P.'s.

Sir Samuel Way said he was present in the capacity of Chancellor of the University. He had been connected with that institution since its birth in 1874. It had its foundation in a gift by Sir W. W. Hughes, which was originally meant for the Union College, but was thought too large for that purpose, and a committee was formed to found the University. Further gifts were forthcoming, and the late Sir Thomas Elder and Sir Henry Bunde were prominent figures in the enterprise. By the Act of 1881 the power to give degrees of science was passed, and a charter was allowed to grant all the degrees in art, science, medicine, and music to women. From the commencement of the University life of the State the guardians were anxious that facilities should be granted to engineering. The constitution of the Adelaide University was the most democratic of any in Australia except perhaps Melbourne. They had their elective body, the senate, and their executive body, the council, and the framing of all the laws in the University had to be approved by those bodies and the Governor-in-Council.

Mr. Ryan—In Queensland and Western Australia the universities are more democratic, are they not?—No, I do not fancy so.

The Chairman—I always thought the Adelaide University was the most ultra-conservative institution in Australia except for Sydney?—Oh, no.

The Chairman—I would be very pleased to think that was so.

Sir Samuel Way (continuing) said he forgot to mention that in 1878 Mr. Angas gave them £4,000 for an engineering scholarship to enable young men who had graduated here to go to the European universities.

The Chairman—Can you tell us the years the different professorships were founded?

Four were established at the foundation of the University, viz.:—1. Classics and comparative philology. 2. English language, mental and moral philosophy, which were the Hughes Chairs; and 3. Mathematics. 4. Natural science, which were endowed with the Sir Thomas Elder bequest. In 1883, thanks again to Sir Thomas Elder, a chair for anatomy and a lectureship of physiology were founded, and in 1886 they completed the medical course. In 1884 the professorship of music was established, and the same year the Hon. J. H. Angas left £6,000 for the endowment of a professorship of chemistry, which accordingly came into vogue in 1885. To Professor Stirling the medical school owed a great debt. He came out just when the University was being founded, and immediately became a patriotic Australian. He turned his back on a promising career in London, and brought his influence to bear on Professor Watson, who also came out.

The Chairman—Some of our best boys have said to me that Professor Stirling, who was like a father to them all, would do anything for them, but the commission should try to get for them some concession from the Hospital Board.

Sir Samuel Way said that was a big question, and he would rather leave it till later on. In 1890 the professorship of law was established in place of the lectureship of law, which was founded in 1883, and he was positive that there was no branch of learning in which the advantage was more perceptible. In 1902 the professorship of history came into vogue, and Professor Henderson had done excellent service in that capacity.

The Chairman—Do you think any amendment of the original Act is desirable?—Yes. An alteration in the representation on the council is necessary, and the Act should be amended to allow of degrees in engineering. At present we can give degrees only in science, with a diploma for engineering. As regarded the constitution

of the University, he thought public bodies interested in technical education should be represented on the elective body.

The Chairman—Is there any objection to the Trades and Labour Council being represented on the Council of the University?

—As a political body I do not think they are entitled to representation, but as an industrial body I cannot see any reason why they should not be represented.

The Chairman—You said just now you repudiated the idea that the University was a sweating institution?—Yes.

The Chairman—Can you tell the commission what Dr. Mawson's salary is?—£400 a year.

The Chairman—And yet men occupying similar positions in other States are in receipt of three and four times that amount. Is not that rather in opposition to your statement?—I can explain that. The Chair was divided into two, and the University could not offer more than £400. Further, tenders were advertised for the position at that salary.

Asked about the requirements of the University, Sir Samuel said they could be set out under seven heads—(1) Increase of present salaries; (2) additions to the staff; (3) new buildings; (4) complete equipment of laboratories; (5) additional annual equipment; (6) University grounds; (7) exemption from land tax. Unless the salaries were raised towards the level of those in other Australian Universities Adelaide must suffer in prestige, and it would be impossible to have a staff of equal efficiency. The professorial salaries offered by the recently established University of Queensland were £900 a year, and even if the salaries here were made the same they would still be well below those of Melbourne and Sydney. A superannuation fund—which was essential—might be formed by retaining 10 per cent. annually. There were five lectureships of £300 or £400 per annum, each of which ought to be increased to £400 and £500 respectively. These increases all together amount to £3,000 a year, and consequential increases in other salaries and wages, including those of the Registrar's department, would bring the additional annual expenditure under this heading to about £4,000.

#### —Suggested Chair of Agriculture.—

Reference was made by the Chairman to the fact that South Australia had secured the services of Professor Lowrie. He suggested that the professor's headquarters might be transferred to the Adelaide University.

Witness said there was already a course of Agriculture in connection with the University. The teaching of the college at Roseworthy was accepted as part of the agricultural course at the University. One of the great ambitions of the University was that there should be a Chair of Agriculture to cover all subjects involved. It was fortunate that the Government had been able to secure the services of such a man as Professor Lowrie, who would be so admirably qualified to be at the head of a faculty of that kind.

The Chairman—Then we can say that the University would welcome the appointment of Professor Lowrie as Professor of a Chair of Agriculture?

Witness—Yes.

The Chairman—We have been told that the teaching at Roseworthy is of an elementary nature, and not so thorough as that at the School of Mines. In view of that we have wondered whether, instead of having a Roseworthy man on the University staff, a School of Mines man should be preferred.

Witness—I cannot speak as an expert; but we are glad enough to accept work done at Roseworthy as service towards the degree.

#### —School of Mines and University.—

In discussion upon the work of the School of Mines, witness paid a tribute to the efforts of Sir Langdon Bonython, in behalf of the school. In establishing the associate course in mining at the School of Mines, Sir Langdon had done a great work, which had given young men in South Australia a professional course in engineering to enable them to embark upon useful careers. Witness touched upon the fact that the school had had the benefit of University professors' services in certain subjects. Both institutions worked well together.

The Chairman—As head of the University, you have nothing but the kindest feelings for the work of the School of Mines?

Witness—I don't think anybody could suggest to the contrary.

Chairman—Have you, as Chancellor of the University, read the Education Bill recently introduced?

Witness—No; but I have obtained a copy to read.

The Chairman—After you have read the Bill we would like to get your answer to

the following question:—"Do you think the University and the Education Department combined could do the work now done by the School of Mines as economically and efficiently as it is done at present?"

Witness said he would answer one question at once. A most useful and noble work was being done by the School of Mines, which was not covered by the Bill or by the work of the University. Valuable efforts were made at the school in regard to the education of artisans. Apprenticeship had died out. (The Chairman—"Unfortunately it has.") The school was furnishing instruction that apprenticeship used to give in an imperfect degree. If the School of Mines did nothing else, that fact amply justified its existence.

#### —Extension Movement and Rhodes Scholarships.—

Professor Mitchell, M.A., stated that he had been connected with the Adelaide University for 16 years. Witness was examined at length, chiefly concerning the question of entrance qualifications necessary for the University.

Touching upon the University extension movement, the Chairman asked whether more would be done, with increased funds, in regard to extension lectures.

Witness—It depends upon the demand. South Australia has achieved more success in that movement than have other States.

The Chairman—Do you think the professors all feel kindly towards the extension movement?

Witness—Yes, very.

In regard to the Rhodes Scholar movement, witness was asked whether the departure of South Australia's best scholars for England met with the commendation of the University authorities.

Witness, in reply, said the precise result of the Rhodes scholarships was unfortunate. However, the fact that Rhodes scholars achieved success in England acted as a great stimulus to gain the scholarships.

#### —Engineering.—

Professor Chapman, professor of mathematics and mechanics, expressed the opinion that the highest technical education ought to be given in conjunction with the highest scientific instruction. The highest technical education in all its branches, witness thought, should be given at the University. The University would always be the best equipped place for such work, and was the natural centre for scientific research. The same applied to agriculture. It was not desired to ask the ordinary farmer to go through the ordinary degree course; but provision should be made for a few men to become scientific experts in agriculture. Roseworthy College was now well provided with laboratories, and the University was satisfied that the work done there was sufficient for its purpose. The University had tried, from the first, to avoid unnecessary duplication of the equipment of the School of Mines. Mining engineering had been taken up at the University, because the instruction at the School of Mines had not been sufficient for a university degree course.

In reply to a question, witness said experience showed that the associate course of the School of Mines and the degree course of the University were both necessary.

Referring to the agreement between the University and the School of Mines, witness said so far as engineering was concerned certain portions of the highest instruction were given at the University, and certain others at the School of Mines. Engineering, in all its branches, ought to be given in one school. There would always be suffering from divided control. As the population of the State increased the establishment of one great central school ought to be looked forward to. That school should be of sufficient prestige to help the student who had received instruction at other institutions. The present agreement between the University and the School of Mines prevented the former institution from developing an engineering school that in equipment would be a worthy rival to engineering schools existing in Melbourne and Sydney. At present there was no real engineering laboratory in Adelaide. Such a laboratory must come in the future. If all the money spent upon the two institutions, so far as engineering was concerned, had been devoted to one school, it would have been much better.

#### —High and Technical Schools.—

Witness was asked whether he favoured the proposal that the Government should take over the control of technical schools in the country.

In reply he said that with the establishment of the high schools' system it seemed to him that that course was unavoidable. In many places there would be high schools and technical schools in the one town, and the work of those institutions would, to a large extent, overlap. Both schools would be teaching, for instance, such subjects as mathematics, physics, and chemistry, and some of these subjects would require expensive laboratories. It was obvious that no duplication was wanted. If the schools were under separate controls in the country he did not see how it would be possible to work without friction. At present the Government had no control or system of inspection in regard to these schools.

At this stage the commission was adjourned until 10 o'clock on Tuesday morning next.