

ADELAIDE'S UNIVERSITY.

ITS NEEDS FOR EXTENSION.

PARLIAMENTARY MEMBERS' RIGHTS.

A strongly-supported deputation waited upon the Commissioner of Public Works (Hon. J. Verran) and the Minister of Education (Hon. F. W. Coneybeer) yesterday morning with regard to some present and future needs of the University of Adelaide.

A Little Hitch.

The Chancellor of the University (Sir Samuel Way) was about to introduce the deputation to Ministers when the Commissioner, interposing, said—"There is one matter which you appear to have overlooked, gentlemen. I always make it a point that any deputation which is introduced to me shall be so introduced by the member for the district concerned. You are from the Adelaide District, and the members for Adelaide should have the right conferred upon them which is theirs, by virtue of their position. I do not want to take any advantage of you, still, I maintain that I am not going to receive a deputation unless the members for the district—of Adelaide in this instance—who have been appointed by the great body of the voters in their electorate, introduce the deputation to me. Those members should be given the right of their privileges.

Sir Samuel Way—This intimation comes as a surprise to us. It is the first we have heard of your having laid down a new rule in regard to the reception of deputations. For the last 23 years I have had the privilege of representing the University at such functions as this. We have followed along the lines we have always gone upon, and have not done this out of any disrespect towards members for the District of Adelaide. We have come here on business as between the University and the Government, and I do not think you mean to say you won't hear us unless we are introduced by members.

The Commissioner—I say that absolutely. I take the stand that all the honor and dignity attaching to the position of a member of Parliament should be accorded to that member by his constituents.

Sir Samuel Way—I think you misunderstand me. For 30 years I have represented the University, and this is the first time this rule has been mentioned. I have been before your immediate predecessors often, and the matter was never then suggested. We made this appointment with you, and we received no intimation of a change of practice. The University of Adelaide is not a local institution, but an institution having regard to the whole of the State.

The Commissioner—You are a local body, coming to ask the Government for certain concessions. If I allow you to come to me without proper introduction I create a precedent for other people to come here and also ignore their members.

Sir Samuel Way—We are not a local body. Our work extends over the whole State, and we have ignored no one consciously. We did not know we should have to be introduced by our members.

The Commissioner—I thought that the deputation understood there were members for the District of Adelaide whose duty and right it was to introduce such a body to me. If a man can be flouted in one way he can be flouted in another.

Sir Samuel Way—I wish, sir, you would not make such accusations. We had not the slightest intention of flouting anybody. For years we have been received by the successive Premiers of the State as we have come before you to-day, and this is the first time that we have been told that we have flouted anybody.

At this stage further contention lapsed while several members of the deputation went scouting for a member of Parliament for the Adelaide District, returning shortly with Mr. W. D. Ponder, M.P.

Mr. Ponder formally introduced the deputation, adding that one of the requests which would be preferred would be the need for the extension of the grounds of the University so as to allow of additional buildings being erected. He did not think that the valuable site on which the Destitute Asylum now stood could be put to better use than that suggested by the authorities of the University.

Unpaid Subsidies.

Sir Samuel Way proceeded to make known the requests of the deputation. He prefaced his remarks with an allusion to the hitch that had occurred at the commencement of the morning's proceedings. He had always looked upon the University as a non-political institution.

The Commissioner—Quite so.

Sir Samuel Way continued that, regarding the University in that light, it had never suggested itself to him or his colleagues that they should need to be introduced to the Government by a member of their district. They regarded themselves as belonging to an institution which represented the whole State. Dealing with the objects of the deputation he said that it was first proposed to ask Ministers to reply to the requests made by a deputation which had waited upon the late Premier (Hon. A. H. Peake) on October 23 last. They were asking for the payment of the customary subsidy for new buildings which the University already had erected, and, secondly, for the same subsidy for buildings of immediate urgency. Thirty-four years ago that subsidy had been started, and the right of the University to it had never been doubted. During the last eight years the University had put up such buildings as the Elder Hall, Prince of Wales' buildings, and medical school, all of which had been very much required. The cost of those amounted to £35,650 and the Government subsidy would therefore be £17,825. At the time these buildings were put in hand they did not apply for the subsidy. The buildings had been urgently required, and they had paid the cost fully expecting that the customary subsidy would never be denied when application was made for it. That was the first request which the deputation had to put before Ministers.

What Other States Do.

Further, the University had immediate wants very pressing indeed, for new buildings. During the last 10 years there had been an unprecedented expansion of the University. In 1899 there were 581 students; in 1909 there were 1040. In the former year there were eight professors and 16 lecturers; there were now 11 professors and 29 lecturers. In Adelaide there was urgent need for more money for the University. Look what was being done elsewhere. During the last 10 years in Sydney the Government had spent in buildings for the University £150,000. This was not a Government subsidy on the pound for pound basis, but the whole cost borne by the Government. In Melbourne, in addition to the subsidy the Government had spent £70,000 on buildings for the University between the years 1883 and 1902. That was what was being done in those States, and he would enumerate the wants of the Adelaide institution in the matter of buildings. The need for the extension of the library was becoming imperative; additional lecturers were needed for the schools of classics and philosophy; adequate accommodation was required for the law school, geological, and mineralogical departments, a caretaker's lodge was urgently needed, accommodation for herbarium and department of botany was not available. They needed common room for students and provision for school of dentistry and veterinary science. The sum that had been asked Mr. Peake's Ministry was £11,000, but that day they were forced to add another thousand to that sum in order to cover the cost of common rooms for the students. Such a want was now being painfully felt. The total cost therefore would be £12,000, and the Government subsidy would amount to £6000. They wanted, furthermore, to begin building at once so that they could complete the work before March next, and thus not interfere with the work of the University. Ministers might ask why these needs had not been made known earlier. He would explain that that on November 25 last they had waited upon Mr. Peake. The House was then anxious to rise, and although Mr. Peake had not given a direct answer he had assured them he was thoroughly in sympathy with them and would place the requests before his colleagues.

Destitute Asylum Site Wanted.

Such were the first and second portions of their requests; the third was not, he said, a matter of such immediate urgency, but it was, nevertheless, one of great practical importance. It dealt with the area of ground on which their buildings stood. At present they were crippled and confined with an area as small as five acres. Melbourne University boasted of 100 acres and Sydney of 128. And the small, inadequate space now had been built upon to a great extent all within the last 10 years, and when they cast

their minds back and saw the extension of buildings that had taken place during the last 30 years they became alarmed at the prospect before them in the next 50 or 100 years. Undoubtedly they must have more than these few acres. Even now they were building for ages to come and must make accommodation for the requirements of the future. There seemed a splendid opportunity of shortly getting increased acreage. This could be done if the area now covered by the police barracks and Destitute Asylum were handed over to the University. Those buildings were old, but no doubt some of them, with but comparatively little alteration, could be utilised by the council. They did not come forward to influence the policy of the Government in respect to the removal of the Destitute Asylum, but merely to urge that if this were done the land should be devoted to the most worthy of purposes—the extension of the University and the State—and an education block thus formed which would be the envy of every State in Australia and the admiration of every visitor who came to these shores. He concluded by reading a letter from Mr. Barr Smith, whose ripe experience and patriotic ardor fitted him to give an expression on such an important question. In this letter Mr. Barr Smith said:—

"Dear Sir Samuel Way—I am very sorry I am not able to be with you on the deputation to the Premier to-day. I hope you will be able to convince him that there is no other public use to which the land you are applying for can be put, at all so important as using it for the subsidiary buildings necessary to the healthy expansion of the University. We are completely surrounded and hemmed in by other institutions; the sole outlet for the University is in the direction of the Destitute Asylum and the police parade ground. I hope you will be able to obtain the promise of a reversionary interest in these, and as immediate possession as is consistent with public convenience. It is our last chance; there is no other place available. We must go on greatly crippled if we do not get this land. In the eastern States the need of room by the universities has been there liberally provided for. The Premier must be convinced that your present application is very reasonable and moderate. —Always, yours very truly, R. Barr Smith."

Professorships Unfilled.

That letter said the Chancellor must carry great weight, especially when added to it was the knowledge that at present the University had neither rooms nor money to pay salaries of professors or lecturers in such subjects as French, German, biology, public health, pathology, zoology, ancient history, astronomy, botany, veterinary science, dentistry, or for a needed division of chairs at the University. These were not new demands; some of them had been before the council for years. They were awaiting and clamoring for attention. In addition to those there was the question of residential colleges.

The Hon. Richard Butler said that he knew there was an intention on the part of the Federal Government to try and secure the site on which the Destitute Asylum now stood for Federal purposes. It was one of the most valuable sites in the State, and the late Mr. T. Price would have warmly supported the proposal to devote it to educational matters, which he had always done much to advance. (Hear, hear.) He wanted to add that members on the Opposition side of the House did not look upon the University aid question as a party one, and would always support reasonable requests.

Mr. van Senden (president of the Chamber of Commerce), as representative of the commercial community, asked the Commissioner and Minister of Education to consider most carefully the advisableness of extending as much as possible instruction in commerce. It would be a most welcome thing to the commercial houses in this State if the University were able to bestow a degree in commerce as was done in other countries. To do this further accommodation would be necessary. He referred also to the necessity for residential colleges in order to get the true esprit de corps of a university, besides providing for country students proper facilities for study.

The Defence Authorities' Intentions.

Mr. T. H. Smeaton, M.P., said that he would object to such a name as Education Square being applied to the area covered by the university buildings. This title had been suggested but was not euphonious enough for him. He knew that the defence authorities intended to approach the Government in regard to a transfer of the Destitute Asylum site in order to extend their own