

A BUSINESS MAN'S REVIEW.

Mr. Hill's Address to Chamber of Commerce.

Government Insurance Proposals Criticised.

In a review of conditions in South Australia during the last twelve months, the retiring president of the Chamber of Commerce yesterday condemned quasi-Government control in the marketing of certain products. Any action in the direction of fixing prices was likely to result in far more harm than good. He also criticised the Government for having embarked upon a scheme of workmen's compensation insurance in defiance of the will of Parliament. The Government, he said, were morally wrong in their action, even supposing they had acted within their judicial rights.

There is a man to look at. A heavy table with square handles of paper, yellow and ragged from long carriage in the pocket, ostentatiously displayed upon its top; a couple of stools set face to face on opposite sides of the easy seat of furniture, a Victorian old chair by the fireplace, a second-hand wig box. . . . these, with the yellow wallpaper of the walls, the smoke-discoloured ceiling, the dust and cobwebs, were among the most prominent decorations of the office of Mr. Sampson Brass.

It is not, I think, quite irrelevant to contrast this with the fact that Miss Somerville and Mrs. Tension Woods have an office which, though simple, dignified, and businesslike, is yet quite the most charming of any I have seen. Dickens was writing in a day which really did think that from a lady gifted with such high tastes "a bling for legal study" "practitioner in those gentler and softer arts in which women usually excel, was scarcely to be looked for." Women who adopted new professions were as likely as not to be "female dragons . . . conducting themselves like professional gentlemen," and the mere earning of

never concerned herself with such a mean reality as the necessity for her husband making a will. Very recently, the legislation on this point was amended in the wife's favour. At present if a husband dies (without making a will) leaving a wife and child or children, the wife takes one-third and the child or children two-thirds. Take the case then of a man who dies leaving £1,000, and who had an infant son or daughter. The widow could only touch a third of her husband's estate, the remainder being tied up until the child was 21. Obviously this would mean that instead of having at least enough capital to start a little shop, the widow with a young baby, would find her hands tied. Again, the wife of a man who leaves no children can claim the whole of the estate if it amounts to only £500, but if it is over that is only entitled to £500 and half the rest—the remainder going to the husband's next of kin who is possibly twice as wealthy as she. The case of the woman who leaves no will is often just as difficult, for even if a great part of her husband's property has been made over to her to avoid income tax, or for other reasons, most of it goes to

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PORTIA ROBED

Industrial Court Precedent

For the first time in an industrial court in South Australia a woman lawyer in robes appeared today before Dr. T. Hewitson (Deputy President) in the case in which persons employed in the plastering industry are applying for an award.

Miss Thelma Bleby, who was admitted a practitioner of the Supreme Court yesterday, appeared with Mr. R. W. . . .

EXCURSION TO KUITPO FOREST.

A party of members of the Field Naturalists' Section of the Royal Society recently visited the Kuitpo Forest, under the direction of Mr. H. H. Corbin, who controls the forest. The forester in charge (Mr. Durward) met the party and provided facilities for having a cup of tea. The buildings comprise huts built of local timber which are used by parties of boys studying forestry who receive a 10 days' course under practical conditions. The boys come from all the schools and colleges of the city and they always wish to return for further training, but this cannot be done as the facilities are not provided for an unlimited number. An inspection of the nursery proved interesting, showing the treatment of pine seedlings. Experiments in dealing with the transplants have led to healthier plants and a small proportion of loss. Close by the nursery a bare area has been planted with six varieties of wattles and several gums, and this has provided a delightful little patch, the former species producing flowers at various times of the year. A great amount of experimental work is being carried out, and requests for information and seeds come from all parts of the world. China recently asked for seeds of trees that would grow in salt water. By planting different species in various situations knowledge is gained as to the best habitats for certain trees. Interesting object lessons are to be had where one species has been planted in many different situations, sometimes the hilltops are favored and sometimes the flats or gentle slopes. One of the most important facts is that some Australian trees, viz., ironbark and sugar gum (two excellent timber trees) grow on poor soils and pay handsomely. Where agricultural operations are impossible and crops will not grow forestry often is a pronounced success. In this connection pinus laricle is bound to play an important part in Australian forestry operations, as it grows well in poor soils on hill tops and produces a high grade white deal. It was due to the observations and experiments at Kuitpo that new crops of tanning bark (from *Acacia pyramantha*) can be produced in two years compared with seven years normally required. By cutting the tree off at ground level after stripping new shoots spring up which are again ready for the stripper in two years. This should prove of immense benefit to wattle growers and to the State in general. Where one stem grew on the original plant several spring up to take its place, thus doubling or trebling the value of the plant. Contrary to general opinion forestry operations bring in a fair revenue in 10 years by thinning out small trees, which (at Kuitpo) find a ready sale. By this means the original cost of planting is repaid, leaving the majority of the trees, which are good sound timber, as clear profit to the grower. Small plantations of pines or Australian trees would pay handsomely in the lifetime of a plasterer who is not more than middle-aged.

News 29.4.25.

Miss Elsie Furneaux Paleck, of Perth, formerly of Adelaide, has passed the final examination for the *Mus. Bac.* degree as excellent.

REGISTER 29.4.25.

"PIECES OF PROFESSOR WOOD JONES."

A ridiculous error, the result of an effort to make a correction at the moment of going to press, appeared in a leading article in *The Register* yesterday, in which the apparent end of the old controversy relating to marsupial birth was discussed. On the subject of sceptics, the leader writer was made to say:—"Neither is it profitable to argue with them that an atom is divisible into a number of parts, because it is not yet possible to show them the pieces of Professor Wood Jones long laboured under a difficulty of this kind in the matter of the so-called mystery of marsupial birth." The added mystery of the typographical error will become clear if a full stop is substituted for "of" after "pieces." The line in which the words occur was reset without reference to the context, and the printer was misled by the resemblance of the journalistic contraction for "of" and the proof reader's conventional mark for a full stop.

ADVERTISER 30.4.25

In consequence of the University Sports Association ball being arranged for Friday, May 8, the meeting of the Graduates' Association, at which Dr. Henton is to deliver a lecture on university problems in Europe and America, has been adjourned until a date to be fixed early in June.

NEWS 30.4.25

Mr. Chive Carey will leave by the train today for Melbourne. While in the eastern State he will sing before the British Music Society, at the home of Mrs. James Dyer, who is the Victorian representative of the Society at Toorak. On Monday he will sing at reunion of the Alliance Francaise in Melbourne.

ADVERTISER 30.4.25.

UNIVERSITY ECONOMICS.

From ARTHUR WHEATON.—I am pleased that Mr. J. Cameron Porter recognises that the workers lack a sound education in the sphere of economics, and, as I stated, not as taught by University lecturers. But why specialise the workers? What about their so-called leaders? Mr. Porter makes a leap from economics to Socialism by stating that he means education towards abolishing the capitalist system. I am thinking my friend knows not where he is, as there is absolutely nothing correlative between the two terms. The true definition of political economy is the science that treats of the nature of wealth and the laws of its production and distribution, dealing specifically with the laws of Nature; whilst Socialism denies all natural laws of distribution and natural ethics. What a terrible bogey capital appears to Socialists, and yet it is but stored up labor, and under natural laws could but perform its natural function, assist labor in the production of further wealth.

The annual general meeting and quarterly luncheon of the Adelaide Chamber of Commerce were held in the Town Hall yesterday. The president (Mr. W. J. Hill) presided, and with him at the principal table were Sir David Gordon, the Hon. G. H. Prosser, Messrs. James Gartrell, C. H. T. Connor, W. Herbert Phillips, Mr. Wallace Bruce (president-elect), J. Lavington Bonython, S. J. Jacobs, A. E. Clarkson, W. B. Carr, and F. A. Verec.

The president, in moving the adoption of the annual report and balance-sheet said a number of questions of vital interest to the State and Commonwealth had received attention, and the council had at all times exerted every effort to secure the correction of anomalies and safeguard the interests of trade, commerce, and production. The holding of the twentieth annual conference of the Associated Chambers of Commerce in Adelaide, in May last, brought prominently before the commercial community generally that very important work was being conducted by the Chambers of Commerce throughout Australia, and that they were fully alive to the importance of encouraging production, and promoting trade and commerce.

A Prosperous Year.

A reviewer of conditions in South Australia during the last twelve months found much that was gratifying. Rural industries were favored with another very good season, and the All-Australian Exhibition which had been in progress for the last month or so, had afforded striking evidence of the virility of secondary production. Their wheatfields yielded 30 million bushels or more, and the bulk of it was disposed of at prices well above the average of the previous year or two. Wool production also showed a substantially expanded total number of bales in comparison with the 1923-4 season, and early in the selling season very high prices were recorded. During the last month or so the world's prices of each of these great staples had fallen sharply; still, the price level had remained uncommonly good, and when all the factors were weighed, it would be found that producers had fared remarkably well. There was always a danger of being carried away by enthusiasm in an era of prosperity. He was a wise man who laid by in the years of plenty for the lean times. Prudence dictated caution in seasons like those recently experienced. South Australia was essentially a producing State, and prosperity depended almost entirely upon propitious weather. Annually they were afforded evidence of this when pure-strings tightened in a delayed break-up of the season, and good inaugural harvest rains were not forthcoming. They had had bad times before, and they would come again. No good purpose was ever achieved by heavily discounting the future. There was need for national, as well as for private stocktaking. The Budget speeches of the months of October or November did not impress the commercial mind as the most propitious moment for making a survey. Stocktaking was necessary at the beginning, and not at the end of a season. It was easy to expand Government activities if Nature smiled. It was very difficult to contract a programme when all it not as it should be.

Wool and Wheat Position.

Early in the wool season they had had a taste of the unexpected problems which were constantly arising in their commercial careers. Credit balances were accumulated in London to such an extent that there was a threatened breakdown in business. Exchange on London reached a very high basis of 5 per cent. Fortunately

prompt action by the banks averted the threatened disaster, and the wool sale were continued. Recently, however, because of the drastic drop in prices, the prearranged monthly offerings were considerably curtailed in an effort to stabilise the position. Much as the drop in values was to be regretted, they would be doing themselves an injustice and the community generally no good if they were to ignore the inviolable law that reaction was the inevitable consequence of enthusiasm outrunning one's better judgment. Enthusiasm, consequent upon the adoption of the Dawes plan and the success of the international gold loan to Germany, had the added stimulus of the sweeping Conservative victories at the British and American elections. Speculation ran riot. The turn came with a lightning of the monetary position in America, and the down-



Mr. W. J. Hill.

ward trend was accelerated by a rise in the British bank rate to 5 per cent. Wool broke before the last-named eventuated, but there was little doubt that the crack in the wheat market was hastened by the inauguration of a period of dearer money.

Law of Supply and Demand.

For months previously there had been talk of "corners" in the wheat market, and for quite as long a period European and American consumers of wool had been bombarded with arguments that there was an insufficiency of wool to go round. Was sufficient weight given to the post-war building up of depleted stocks in estimating the world's annual requirements of wool and wheat? Recent events suggested the need for remembering that only so long as there was elasticity in supply and demand and so long as there was free and open competition between buyers and between sellers was the law of supply and demand really effective in protecting communal interests and in avoiding drastic price fluctuations and the exploitation of the public. While on that subject it was opportune, in view of the seeming tendency to restore quasi-Government control in the marketing of certain products, to emphasize that if buying was competitive and demand was elastic, then for the State to take action in the direction of fixing prices was likely to result in far more harm than good. No country producer competitively a world-required product could possibly be a power unto itself.

Excessive Borrowing.

Although there was much more confidence in the financial position than at