

FORESTRY IN AUSTRALIA.

A Payable Proposition.

By E. Anthony, M.P.

The history of forestry in Australia, whenever it is written, will be a painful narrative of neglected opportunities, prodigious waste, and almost criminal apathy on the part of many who have been from time to time entrusted with the care and development of this great national asset. Only recently, while speaking in Victoria, Mr. Prendergast remarked that forestry was not an important Government department. Thus, amid the stress of politics, forestry is liable to be pushed into the background, while the world's press has been endeavouring in unmistakable language to demonstrate the almost immediate danger of a great world shortage of timber. Capt. MacIntosh Ellis, the Director of Forestry in New Zealand, in the course of an address so recently as June of last year, stated:—"Our forests are fast disappearing and great areas have become barren, man-made deserts, producing nothing of value to man or beast."

A Defined Policy Needed.

Our forest experts at conference after conference have emphasized the need of a properly defined forest policy for Australia, and so insistent has been the appeal that at length the Governments of the several States, having become alarmed, are endeavouring to set this important department upon a thoroughly scientific foundation. With the exception, perhaps, of South Australia, soil and forest surveys have been initiated, and proper working plans of forest operations are being prepared. The need for increased activity in our own country is necessitated by the shrinkage of productive areas overseas, a situation stressed by Lord Lovat, the Chairman of the British Empire Conference, who, in an address to delegates last year, stated:—"Softwood represents 80 per cent. of the imported commercial woods used in the Empire. Russia, in the past, had dominated the position. Now, however, 250 million acres in Russia were out of commission; of the Baltic nations, Sweden is the only one which is growing timber at a greater rate than she is cutting it, in addition to which the virgin forests of the United States have been reduced from 822 to 137 million acres per annum." The whole position in a nutshell was embodied in a resolution of conference, which sets out—"That, in view of the great and increasing drain on the softwood forests of the world, it is incumbent on every part of the Empire to conserve and augment its own resources of coniferous trees." Side by side with this increasing shortage is the ever-increasing demand made by industry on forest products for raw material, due to the march of population, and the greater per capita consumption, which, in the United Kingdom alone, has trebled during the 60 years prior to the war, and is still steadily increasing. Great Britain's importation of timber reaching £50,000,000 per annum, 83 per cent. coming from foreign countries. Forewarned should mean forearmed.

What South Australia Might Do.

But is Australia really heeding the warnings so frequently uttered? What is Australia actually doing to grapple with this great problem? I have stated previously that in each of the States, our own excepted, a vigorous policy of scientific forestry is being pursued. Governments are gradually realizing that forestry pursued on scientific lines pays, that in addition to its many other valuable attributes it has a decided commercial value, but this has been so, however, only since the department has, in each case, been placed under the direct control of a Forestry Commission, removed as far as possible from political control. A commission, consisting of men who are capable of outlining a sound and progressive policy, and whose administration would in time win—after enlightening it—so great a body of public opinion that no Government would dare ignore it. Last year New South Wales spent nearly £30,000 on forest development. She has nearly 1½ million acres under working plans, and made a net profit of £120,405. Victoria also concluded her operations for the year with a credit balance of £24,302. South Australia has an area in forests worth at least half a million, and once held pride of place as the finest softwood producing State in the Commonwealth; the growth of these woods being phenomenal, and the annual forest increment is a record for Australia, and as far as can be gleaned from available records unequalled even in New Zealand. The wood has been proved suitable for building and joinery work, and for peeping purposes has no superior. That there is an effective demand for this purpose is exemplified by a recent enquiry for a supply of 750,000 cubic feet of pine per annum for a period of 15 years. This order could be supplied, assuming that the present planting policy is maintained without materially affecting the supply,

Forestry, as stated, can be made a payable proposition; this is abundantly demonstrated by other States, and while our natural advantages are perhaps not so great, still, with a trained and efficient staff, operating with up-to-date equipment and a constructive not an obstructive policy, forestry will care for itself, and do it well.

AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH.

Inspection of Urrbrae.

Comprehensive Work Explained.

On Saturday more than 250 guests, including University professors, and members of the Graduates' Association and others, accepted the invitation of Professor and Mrs. Richardson to visit the Urrbrae Estate, which was bequeathed to the Adelaide University by the late Mr. Peter Waite, as an agricultural research institute. The visitors were pleased to learn that, although the historic home of the late Mr. Waite is now performing an important and useful function in the community, none of its beauty would be lost, but rather that it would be enhanced under the expert and artistic direction of Dr. Richardson. In giving an account of the progress made and intentions for the future, Dr. Richardson said the magnificent and generous gift of the late Mr. Peter Waite had rendered possible the establishment in South Australia of a new type of institution for Australia—an agricultural research institute—under the control of the



DR. A. E. V. RICHARDSON.

University, where investigational and research work in agriculture and allied subjects would be conducted in the interests of agricultural science and the agricultural community. Agriculture was the basis of the nation's wealth, and liberal expenditure on agricultural research was now regarded as a wise national investment which would ultimately be returned many times over in the form of increased production. The importance of agricultural research was fully recognised in other countries, and was liberally endowed both from public and private funds. The scope for investigational work in a new country like Australia was vast, and was limited only by the personnel and funds available for the work. At the present time Australia was largely dependent for the scientific basis of her agriculture on principles established under climatic conditions entirely different from those of this country. The University Council had decided that for the present, the main objective of the Waite Institute would be to conduct investigations and researches into crop and soil problems.

Initial Work.

The initial work of the institute would be to conduct certain fundamental investigations of soil and crop problems. These include the soil, the crop, both in the field and the laboratory, of the soil and crop problems, and the soil, the crop, and utilization of them.

attention to those of importance in South Australian agriculture, and the study of the fungoid diseases of farm crops, their incidence, modes of attack, and life history, with a view to the more effective control of these pests. The work would also include investigations into the best methods of producing the various types of farm crops, the influence of fertilizers, varying cultural methods, rotation cropping on the yield of the principal farm crops, the methods of production of new and improved varieties of farm crops, and the study of native and introduced grasses and fodder plants. The area of land left to the University under the Waite bequest amounted to 300 acres, comprising the three estates of Urrbrae, Claremont, and Netherby. Although only a few months have elapsed since the staff of the institute had assembled, a considerable amount of work had been done.

Permanent Experimental Field.

Dr. Richardson and several of his assistants then conducted the guests over the different experimental plots, culture houses, laboratory, and so on, and their explanations of the different activities were instructive and highly interesting. Dr. Richardson first showed the visitors an area of 30 acres of land—typical of the Adelaide and coastal plains—cleared, fallowed, and subdivided into 250 field plots. He said the tests on this field comprised the following:—Permanent rotation plots, fertilizer tests with seeded native grasses, fertilizer tests with wheat, oats, and barley, cereal tests, rate of seeding and time of sowing trials, cultural and tillage tests, experiments to determine the experimental error in field investigations, and plots for the study of the inheritance of character in wheat, oats, and barley. The permanent rotation tests comprised a series of 35 plots. The object of the tests was to determine the most profitable system of rotation cropping for land with a 21-in. rainfall, and the changes which took place in the fertility of soil as a result of varying systems of crop rotation. There would be set apart for the determination of the influence of fertilizers on the growth and yield of wheat, oats, and barley, and the cumulative effect of each fertilizer on the fertility of the soil, 120 field plots.

Top Dressing of Pastures.

Continuing the doctor said that on the Claremont Estate, a series of demonstra-

THE PRIME MINISTER AND THE PROTOCOL.

From W. A. HAMILTON.—As Professor Darnley Naylor gives an unqualified denial to my statement that he had "changed his ground" in this discussion, I accept it in good faith and will only say that that is the light in which his attitude appeared to me. I will not traverse his reasons in support of his denial, except to say that I had read all the resolutions he now refers to at the time they were published, but saw no reason for public comment thereon. It was only when the Professor attacked the Prime Minister that I thought it necessary to point out that he (the Professor) was putting an unfair construction on Mr. Bruce's action and making a party question of what should be a purely national one. There the matter may rest so far as I am concerned. I still think it regrettable that the Professor will not discuss the protocol itself. Had he, from his elevated position, taken up the cudgels in its favour (assuming of course that he is in favour of it), much educational work might have been accomplished. He does, however, go so far as to say that—"When any one has watched with grave anxiety the fortunes of an organization which, in his eyes, provides the only hope of happiness for his own and his neighbour's children, and the only hope of preserving what mankind has won with tears and travail, he is likely to feel any action or want of action calculated to injure that organization, and such words as 'piqued and annoyed' are a weak and colourless description of his feelings." By this sentence he appears to ally himself definitely with the League of Nations, and its latest work, and I hope I am not straining the position by saying that he is in favour of the protocol as it stands. If that be correct, how can he logically refuse to "enter upon a debate about communism?" No one can deny that this abominable, (I use the word advisedly) theory with its doubly abominable practices, is making rapid strides in every country on the globe. No one can deny that its advocates, even in this State, are wilfully deceiving the public by picturing socialization of industry (which is only another name for communism) as a "noble ideal," well knowing that its ideal is the very reverse of "noble." That instead of (as Tennyson said), "making the bounds of freedom wider yet," it restricts, enslaves, and oppresses. What a terrible comment on the protocol itself is the recent communist plot in Bulgaria, whereby a great Christian church was blown up, 130 innocent people killed, and 1,300 injured. Yet Bulgaria is one of the nations that signed the protocol. If that country were consulted I venture to prophesy that she would gladly consent to the League of Nations considering the question and endeavouring to stop the growth of communism. It has to be stopped or the civilization to which we have attained will surely go under, and the world will revert to an age of darkness, poverty, and

savagery. I believe that Mr. Bruce was right in rejecting the protocol in the name of Australia. Discussion of it by Parliament would only have been a waste of time and money. Had it been accepted

by Great Britain and the dominions it would have caused more wars than it could have prevented. The nations that up to last December had signed the protocol were—Spain, Albania, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Chili, Czechoslovakia (crushed), Estonia, France, Greece, Latvia, Paraguay, Poland, Portugal, the Serb-Croat-Slovene State, and Uruguay. With the exception of France, and remotely Spain, not one of these nations counts for anything in the good management of the world and its intricate and ever-varying problems. Yet had Great Britain signed this foolish document she might any day be called upon by a majority of these pigmy nations to engage in a war with any other Great Power, because of some breach of agreement entered into by the League of Nations. However desirable it may be to "preserve what mankind has won with tears and travail," it will not be found by the methods provided in the protocol. I notice too, that Russia will have nothing to do with the League of Nations or the protocol, "because it would interfere with her domestic policy." Just what one might expect from the atrocious Government of that unhappy country. The Russian Government (not Russia) wants to be at liberty to force upon every other country her abominable system, reeking with murder, loot, corruption, and destruction of religion, and her agents all over the globe now with that in the purpose constantly in view. In Australia they are undermining our free institutions and mastering with more success than it is at all comfortable to contemplate. They are aided and abetted by local Communists, who look upon every blow given to the Anti-Labour Parties as a "step towards the socialization of industry." That is why I resented the unwarrantable blows given to Mr. Bruce by Professor Darnley Naylor, and while I would not for a moment deem him guilty of being in league with the Communists I think I am justified in saying that his drastic criticism of Mr. Bruce is likely to influence votes against the Prime Minister and his party. Whatever faults that party may have, it at least has the merit of standing for the preservation of law and order, and for a peace-loving, unaggressive British Commonwealth of nations, and it is the strength and unity of this nation of nations that will do more to ensure the peace of the world than anything else. Bitterly though we may deplore war, it is sometimes unavoidable, and we shall not prevent it by arming ourselves with pot sticks, while our enemies of the future are manufacturing 15-lb. guns. As a last word in this controversy, so far as I am concerned, it is some comfort to quote the words of Pausanias in "Cymbeline." "All other doubts, by time let them be cleared; fortune brings in some boats that are not steered."

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