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# THE MELROSE LABORATORY.

## Foundation-Stone Laid.

## Ceremony at Urrbrae.

**"Of all the Institutions of the State and Commonwealth none will help the development of the national resources more than the Waite Institute," said the Minister of Agriculture yesterday at the laying of the foundation-stone of the chemical laboratory presented to the Institute by Mr. John Melrose.**

At the Waite Institute for Agricultural Research at "Urrbrae" on Thursday morning, the foundation-stone of the Melrose laboratory, an elevation of which appeared in "The Advertiser" yesterday, was laid by Miss Margaret Melrose, the daughter of the donor. There was a large attendance of guests, who were afterwards entertained at morning tea by Mrs. A. E. V. Richardson.

(The Chancellor of the University of Adelaide (Sir George Murray) under whose Mr. Peter Waite made over to the University his estate, comprising the house and 200 acres of land, with an endowment of £200,000, to advance the cause of education in agriculture, forestry, and allied subjects, the responsibility fell upon the council of the University to decide on the best means of giving effect to the wishes of the donor. After prolonged consideration, they decided not to interfere with what was being done, but with what would be done, at Roseworthy College, but to endeavor to enlarge the field of knowledge by including in agriculture in its widest sense, and pass it on to those actively engaged in production as farmers and graziers. Direct teaching might be deferred to a later date. The result of the council's deliberations had been the establishment of the Waite Institute. It was one thing to establish a research institute, but quite another to make it successful, which depended on the staff which could be enabled. It was resolved to create a professorship of agriculture and another of agricultural chemistry. They still faced with the difficulty of finding suitable chairs. At length they had secured the services of Professor A. V. Richardson and Professor J. A. Prescott, who made much of the institute, and Professor Prescott made an able substitute in his absence. The services of Mr. Waite's land had been secured as plant pathologist, and other places on the staff were filled by enthusiastic body of young workers of whom they were all proud.

### Work of the Institute.

Active work at the institute was begun in March, 1925, and during the intervening period of nearly three years the work had been carried on in scattered quarters—one in the basement of the library and three in the building which originally the stable. Investigation had been limited to the scientific principles underlying the production of farm crops, the improvement of pastures, the breeding of improved varieties of cereals and plants, the investigations of soil problems connected with the Murray settlers, fungus attacking farm crops and the investigation of tomato wilt. Generous assistance had been received from the Government and Parliament of the State, the Waite Marketing Board, the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, and private benefactors. Mr. John Melrose had given £10,000 for the erection of a chemical laboratory, and Mr. A. F. Beck £2,000 for its equipment. Massey firms had given machinery to the value of £1,250, and the Superphosphate Union had supplied all the fertiliser required, in addition to a donation of £1,000. The British Government Board, and the Empire Marketing Board, £3,000 towards the cost of the laboratory, and the sum of £1,875 a year for three years for pastoral research. The Council for Scientific and Industrial Research had given £3,000 towards the laboratory, and £1,000 a year for two years for general research and £1,400 for the erection of a glass house for the study of tomato wilt. The council was also paying the whole cost of the investigation of the soil problems of the Murray River. The State Parliament recently appropriated funds for the next five years for the development and extension of the institute. The sum of £5,000 was payable this year, and this amount would be gradually increased to £15,000 by 1937. This generous assistance would enable the Institute to develop on lines in order effective service to the agricultural industry. The most pressing need was for permanent and properly equipped laboratories. Mr. Melrose's gift would provide only for chemistry and other subjects, and economic entomology would receive early attention during the year. During his tour abroad the Vice-Chancellor (Sir William Mitchell) would make special enquiries for an entomologist to take charge of that work.

Plans for buildings to provide [illegible] future requirements in the institute had been prepared by the university architect. The John Melrose laboratory formed the south wing of the entire building. It was particularly glad that Mr. Melrose, who had been a lifelong personal friend of his own, had shown his interest in agriculture in such a practical and generous manner. He had been moved, probably, by his admiration for Mr. Peter Waite, but he was a man of strong individuality, and no doubt had arrived himself at the same conclusion as Mr. Waite had, that agriculture was the foundation of the prosperity of the State, and the best service one could render to the country was to endeavor to improve production by calling in the aid of science. He asked Mr. Melrose to accept the profound thanks of the University for his timely and splendid gift. (Applause.)

### The Laying of the Stone.

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Miss Melrose received the silver trowel from the hands of Mr. Lavbourne Smith, of the firm of Woods, Bagot, and Laybourne Smith, the architects of the building. She declared the stone well and truly laid, and said she was proud to be asked to perform the ceremony and to have a finger in the pie of so many worthy causes. In the building was a great honor to be associated with the ideas of Mr. Peter Waite. In other countries a bequest of £200 to £300 was raised to the acre. Australia had a good deal of leeway to make up, but she hoped that all the experiments which would be carried out in the laboratory would bring Australian production somewhere near that, and perhaps teach the sheep to grow two fleeces a year. (Laughter and applause).

### A Sound National Investment.

The Minister of Agriculture (Hon. J. Cowan) said it was his pleasure to move a vote of thanks to Miss Melrose. South Australia had been blessed in the number of public-spirited citizens it had possessed, and still possessed, men who, having won success, were desirous of giving the avenue of opportunity to others. He doubted if gifts could be better utilised than in regard to the work of the institutions of the State and Commonwealth, none would help the development of the national resources more than the Waite Institute. Mr. Melrose had shown an example of good citizenship, and his wise and generous gift was greatly needed. It was impossible to estimate the value of the work that was being carried on. Even if the value of the River Murray could have been analysed before the settlements were formed large sums of money would have been saved. Gratitude had been defined as a lively expectation of favors to come. (Laughter.) If they were wise to utilise the institute to its fullest extent it must be adequately maintained. With that in view, the Government in the last year made a donation which would be useful, but not sufficient. Larger sums would be required if the property were to be fully developed. The present in this way was a sound national investment, which would be returned many thousands of times. They were very fortunate to have in control of the institute a man like Dr. Richardson, who was a South Australian born, a graduate of Roseworthy College and of the University of Adelaide, Messrs. Waite, Melrose, and Mortlock had, by their generous gifts, rendered great service to the country. Miss Melrose had gracefully contributed to her father's gift. (Applause.)

### "Most Important Nature."

The Director of the Institute (Dr. A. E. Hardy), seconding the vote of thanks to Miss Melrose, proffered the congratulations of the staff to Mr. Melrose on his splendid gift, which would enable them to erect the first permanent building for agricultural research. Less than three years ago the institute began with a staff of six. By the time the building was ready for occupation 24 eager members of the staff would be anxious to occupy it. The work could be divided into six groups—biochemistry and soil problems, under Professor Prescott; plant pathology, genetics, which would endeavor to create new and more prolific plants, and pasture research from various angles. By the co-operation of the Empire Marketing Board, which had contributed £14,000, and the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, who had contributed about £7,000, the research had been made possible, and that was the pioneer institution of its kind in Australia, the institute had found how illimitable were the problems that required solution, and how involved and complicated they were. The common problem of the world was to wrest from reluctant Nature all that she could be made to give. Soil problems depended on the application of science to every branch. In all the countries of the world there was remarkable activity in the development of agricultural research, the sole aim of which only in the new countries, where Nature had reserved vast tracts for agriculture, but in the older countries where the soil had been intensively cultivated for years, and in the Far East where farming had been the staple industry for centuries, South Australia would have to keep in line with this development, and had every reason for gaining the full benefit of Education Act last year.

"This is the era of the application of science to industry," said Dr. Richardson. "The era of the application of science to agriculture has not yet arrived, but when it does the research will be out of all proportion to the money spent on it. Let us endeavor to use the soil to its greatest advantage, for the present generation and the generations yet unborn, and see that all research is brought to bear on its utmost application. The staff sincerely hopes that the results from the laboratory will fully justify the magnificent gift of Mr. Melrose." (Applause).

Responding to the vote of thanks, Miss Melrose said it appeared that other buildings were necessary, and looking round she could see many people who might well follow a good example. (Laughter).

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At Government House yesterday, His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor (Sir George Murray) presented to Sir Douglas Mawson the Medal of the Societe de Geographie of Paris. The society was founded in 1821, and the medal is its 1927 award for oceanography. It was awarded to Sir Douglas Mawson in recognition of his oceanographic work done by the Australasian Antarctic expedition in 1911, of which Sir Douglas was the leader. That expedition achieved results which were of world-wide interest, and Sir

Sir Douglas Mawson.

Douglas received many congratulations on its successful outcome. It was not his first expedition, for after being demonstrator in chemistry at the Sydney University he undertook geological exploration in the New Hebrides, and in 1908 he was appointed to the scientific staff of Sir Ernest Shackleton's Antarctic expedition. His association with the Adelaide University dates from 1905, when he was appointed a lecturer. In 1921 he became Professor of Geology and Mineralogy. He took the degree of Doctor of Science in 1909, and a knighthood was conferred on him in 1913.

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## A BRILLIANT LAWYER.

## Death of Dr. Donald Kerr.

Dr. Donald Kerr died at [illegible] Hospital on Monday morning [illegible] of injuries he received on Saturday [illegible] he was found lying unconscious [illegible] wounded in the bathroom at his [illegible] Ward street, North Adelaide. [illegible] quest will be held.

### Soldier and Lawyer.

The deceased was one of the [illegible] liant young men in the South [illegible] legal profession. He was born at [illegible] bridge 35 years ago, and began his [illegible] tion at Pulteney Grammar School. [illegible] his father, the late Rev. Donald K[illegible] head master, and subsequently at [illegible] St. Peter's College. He achieved [illegible] success and won many prizes, including the McCulloch history scholarship.

He graduated at law at Adelaide University in 1914, and was the Stow gold medallist. Enlisting in 1915 with the 50th Battalion as a stretcher bearer, he first saw service in Egypt. He was later in operations in Armentieres, the Somme, and Passchendaele, where in the face of the enemy Dr. Kerr was awarded the military medal. He received written congratulations from Major-Gen. Cox, commanding officer of the 4th Division. Having been wounded, he eventually arrived back in Adelaide, and resumed his law practice, obtaining the degree of Doctor of Law in 1919. He was probably the youngest in the Commonwealth to achieve that honour. After that he made distinct additions to legal libraries by his work, "The Law of the Australian Constitution," for which he received many congratulations from legal luminaries the world over. His second work, "The Australian Real Property Torrens System," was placed in the hands of the Law Book Company.

Dr. Kerr served a term of office as Federal Vice-President of the Returned Sailors and Soldiers' Imperial League, and assisted in laying the foundations of the Federal body of the league. He was recognised as an authority on electoral problems. Intensely interested in the furtherance of private enterprise, he was associated with the efforts of the Adelaide and Suburban Bee Owners' Association in the protection of private rights. His brilliant work in that direction has been well recognised. At the last State elections Dr. Kerr was a candidate for the Adelaide District in the House of Assembly, but was not successful. He has left a widow and four young children.

The loss of Dr. Kerr, as a citizen, will be deplored throughout the State. He had arranged to give evidence before the Commonwealth Constitution Commission on Saturday, and his knowledge of constitutional matters and the finer points involved legal questions was outstanding.

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MR. R. R. F. BARBOUR, B.A.

The master of St. Andrew's College, Adelaide, Mr. Barbour, reached Adelaide on Tuesday to initiate the work of this college, which—founded in memory of the late Sir John Duncan and Lady Duncan by the members of their family—will commence its first term next month.