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THE AGRICULTURAL BUREAU OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Attached is a record of the Early History of the Bureau Movement in South Australia, together with reference to the origin of the Department of Agriculture.

There is some doubt as to accuracy of some dates associated with the notes on the origin of the Department. However they are not anticipated to be grossly inaccurate.

This record has been compiled for the benefit of members of the Advisory Board and all members of the Agricultural Bureau Branches.

The Advisory Board has requested that this record be filed in the minute book of your Branch.

G. K. Robinson,

SENIOR ADVISORY OFFICER.

1964.

## THE EARLY HISTORY OF THE AGRICULTURAL BUREAU

### THE FOUNDER

ALBERT MOLINEUX was born at Brighton, Sussex, England on July 11, 1832, he being the eldest son of the late Mr. Edward Molineux, who carried on business as a boot and shoe manufacturer in the above-named town.

The subject of this memoir arrived in the colony with his parents in the barque "Resource", in January, 1839. After leaving school, he went to work on a farm at Klemzig, on the opposite side of the Torrens to Payneham. Leaving farming, he was apprenticed as a printer, and, after serving his time, worked at his case until 1851, when he emigrated to the Victorian diggings, doing fairly well for four years.

On his return to Adelaide he accompanied his father to the farm on the River Gilbert for a year, and returned to Adelaide, and worked at his trade at the Government Printing Office, the South Australian Register, and Messrs. Vardon and Pritchard's. Mr. Andrews having discontinued the publication of the Farm and Garden, Mr. Molineux resuscitated it under the title of the Garden and Field, the first number being issued on August 10, 1875.

Shortly after this he had the appointment conferred upon him of agricultural editor of the South Australian Register and Adelaide Observer, a position which he occupied until 1891, when he was obliged to relinquish it and dispose of the Garden and Field, in order to devote all his time to the Agricultural Bureau, which he had been instrumental in establishing, and of which he was the first General Secretary.

For nearly thirty years, Mr. Molineux was closely associated with all advance movements in connection with agricultural progress on South Australia. He has probably written more on this subject and progressive agriculture than any other man in South Australia.

While he was General Secretary of the Bureau of Agriculture he visited the various agricultural centres, lecturing on a modern system of dairying, and in eighteen months he succeeded in inducing the farmers to form thirty-two cooperative dairying companies. This led to the adoption by the Government of a bonus for export on butter, necessitating the establishment of a refrigerating-chamber for its reception and cooling, and eventually to the export of frozen lambs and other produce. This business, under the auspices of the Government, has assumed very large proportions, and its success is now permanently assured.

Mr. Molineux also turned his attention to the spraying of fruit trees as a method of destroying insect and fungus pests, which had become so prevalent as to threaten the actual existence of the fruit-growing industry. In the Barossa district alone, through the general adoption of spraying, it is estimated that as least £10,000 per annum has been saved to the fruit-growers; while optimists declare that it is fully £20,000.

Through the establishment of the Bureau of Agriculture farmers have been brought into closer union, and the system has been almost generally adopted of using commercial fertilizers, especially phosphatic manures.

In regard to wheat-growing, Messrs. Cudmore & Parsons, near Minlaton, Yorke Peninsula, tried the experiment of sowing a small quantity (about fifty pounds) of superphosphate per acre with the seed-wheat, the object being to stimulate its growth, so that it might smother the weeds. The effect was most satisfactory, the crop being doubled. Messrs. Correll Brothers, farming near the same place, followed the example of Messrs. Cudmore and Parsons, and reported satisfactory results to the Minlaton Branch of the Agricultural Bureau. This report was published in the Journal of Agriculture, and, in the following year several other branches adopted the practice with equally gratifying results.

During the next season the demand for superphosphates exceeded all the expectations of the merchants. Since then the supply has been fully equal to the demand, owing to the discovery of rich deposits of phosphate rock in various parts of the State; and the imports of phosphate manures have, in consequence, been greatly reduced.

Mr. Molineux severed his connection with the Bureau of Agriculture in 1902, when he reached his seventieth year. He was then appointed a life member of the newly-constituted Council of Agriculture, the name of which was, on the recommendation of Professor William Angus, the Secretary of Agriculture, altered to that of the Agricultural Board of Advice.

Mr. Molineux is also a life member of the Royal Agricultural Society of South Australia and of the South Australian Zoological Society. Having always been a close observer, a keen sportsman, and a lover of nature, he has, in a desultory manner, extended the knowledge of the natural history of the State, and has been the means of introducing to scientific notice many new species of animals and plants.

He constructed the first trawl-nets used for natural-history purposes in the State, and with it secured, during the first week of its use, some forty species of fish new to South Australia, many being new to science. These were described by Count de Castelnau, then in Melbourne. He also secured the specimens from Kangaroo Island by which the Royal Society obtained the honour of being the first to publish the method of reproduction of the native porcupine (*Echidna hystrix*), the investigation being made at his suggestion.

Mr. Molineux was also instrumental in securing the skeleton of the Pigmy Whale (*Neobalaena marginata*) for our Museum, it being then the only perfect specimen in any museum.

In 1893 he persuaded his nephew, who was going into the interior, to keep a look-out for anything strange, and send it down. The result was the discovery of the marsupial mole (*Notoryctes typhlops*).

In recognition of his services in this and in other ways, Mr. Molineux was elected a Fellow of the Linnaean Society of Great Britain, being nominated thereto by Baron Sir F. von Mueller and Mr. Charles French. Mr. Molineux belongs to the MacDonnell Lodge of Freemasons, Glenelg. He has been married, and has one son.

(Extract from the Cyclopaedia of South Australia).

Volume I. 1907.

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THE FOUNDATION OF THE  
CENTRAL AGRICULTURAL BUREAU

Although the Agricultural Bureau was not formed until 1888, it really had its origin in various less formal Farmers' Clubs (or Unions) which sprung up throughout the State in the very early 1880's.

The activities of these farmers' clubs were fairly extensively reported in the "Garden and Field", edited by A Molineux. The most successful of these organisations and the one whose activities most resembled the Bureau was the Barossa Farmers' Union (1881-1887). The Wasleys Farmers' Union had an active but turbulent life in which it managed to quarrel bitterly with Professor Custance, the first Principal of Roseworthy Agricultural College. The Alma Farmers' Club kept going for sometime after the forming of the Bureau.

About the same time other farmers' organisations, particularly the South Australian Farmers' Mutual Association formed branches throughout the State with a dual set of aims:

- (1) to promote the business of farming, compare the bureau and the original aim of the Farmers' Club.
- (2) political action: "to unite for the purpose of returning men of our own class to represent us in both Houses of Legislature".

In 1887, Mr. Molineux, in giving evidence before a Select Committee on Vegetable Products, suggested the establishment of an Agricultural Bureau in S.A.

Mr. Molineux believed that such an organisation would be the best means of educating primary producers, realising, as he did, that there was much need for improvement in farming practices and with the knowledge, too, that without something of the kind it was not an easy task to get farmers to come in close contact for the purpose of discussing their work and their problems.

The final report of the Select Committee was completed in November 1887 and it contained a recommendation as follows:- "Your Committee is hopeful that at no distant date Mr. Albert Molineux's suggestion with regard to an Agricultural Bureau may be carried out".

Mr. A. Molineux, during the 1880's waged an unrelenting campaign to promote the spread of true farmers' clubs, and get these organisations to divorce themselves from political activity and concession seeking. His comments in "Garden and Field" in February, 1886 are most interesting in regard to what he considered a Farmers' Union should be.

"Every farmer in the colony should be a member and attendant of a Farmers' Union. At their meetings, they should talk about nothing but matters concerning farming, compare notes with each other, read papers upon farm topics and discuss the same. They should have a good library of books that treat chiefly upon rural matters, though these might include some useful books for the younger people and for the wives.

The Foundation of the Central Agricultural Bureau (cont.)

During the slack time, the Union should arrange a series of visits on several of the farms belonging to their members and they should also have a careful report upon the annual District show. Where there is any special group or any other thing within a reasonable distance at any time that is likely to be instructive, the members of the Union should be invited in a body to visit it.

Politics, religion and all debatable subjects should be nowhere in a Farmers' Union."

Mr. R. Homburg (who was a member of the Select Committee) wrote to the Commissioner of Crown Lands - "The members of the Committee, feeling that the time is opportune for bringing this recommendation under your special notice, requested me prior thereto to interview Dr. Schomburgk, Mr. J.E. Brown, Mr. F. Krichauff, Sir Samuel Davenport and Mr. A. Molineux, all of whom expressed their approval of the establishment of such a Bureau, and have assented to undertake the honorary duties of members thereof, of which Professor Lowrie should also be a member. The duties of such Bureau would, in the opinion of the members of the Select Committee, be to foster and disseminate information concerning the growth of our agricultural and horticultural products in all portions of our colony, having due regard to climate and rainfall; the taking of careful statistics relative thereto, and to the trade and commerce of our products; modern inventions, practical and scientific cultivation; to assist existing and affiliated institutions and generally to limit and extend them as may, in the opinion of the Government for the time being, be deemed expedient."

On the 27th February, 1888 the Government adopted the suggestion and on 10th April, 1888 the inaugural meeting was held. Thus the central Agricultural Bureau was formed. On 28th January, 1889, Mr. Molineux was appointed the first Hon. Secretary.

Other Secretaries have been:-

W.L. Summers  
G.G. Nicholls  
H.J. Finnis  
H.C. Pritchard  
F.C. Richards  
C.J. Woods, Organiser

The Central Agricultural Bureau of South Australia was to consist of nine or more members and was given power to nominate corresponding district Bureaux.

Eventually the Central Bureau was replaced by the Council of Agriculture in June, 1902, and the Council was reconstituted as the Advisory Board of Agriculture on 18th July, 1905.

The Function of the Central Bureau was:-

- (1) to advise the Minister of Agriculture regarding agricultural matters.
- (2) to supervise and act as a Board of Control of the Agricultural Bureau of South Australia.

Somewhere about 1900 or a little earlier the Department of Agriculture and the Bureau of Census and Statistics took over many of the functions formerly in the hands of the Central Bureau.

#### THE FUNCTIONS OF THE BUREAU

The functions of the Bureau were to collect and publish in the press and through district bureaux, information of any kind likely to be beneficial to the colonists engaged in agricultural, horticultural, pastoral, and other pursuits connected with the cultivation of the soil.

In more details these were to:

- (1) Investigate and report on the suitability of various districts of the colony, with regard to soil, situation, climate, elevation, aspects etc., for the growth or production of plants, animals etc.
- (2) Obtain information respecting plants, animals, products etc., likely to be useful to cultivators.
- (3) Investigate the best methods of cultivating various kinds of crops, and the breeding and feeding of domestic animals, and of improving the same.
- (4) Sort out the methods of preparing and preserving various products for market, and the discovery of markets for the products of the soil.
- (5) Collect agricultural statistics particularly:
  - (a) area under cultivation in each district.
  - (b) number and breeds of animals.
  - (c) nature and condition of crops each month.
  - (d) times of sowing, planting, and harvesting.
  - (e) average yield per acre of fruits, cereals, etc.
  - (f) cost of cultivating each kind of crop.
  - (g) any other information likely to serve as a guide to intending settlers.
- (6) Collect information in respect to all kinds of pests affecting farm, forest, garden, orchard and vineyard.
- (7) Find out and publicise best means of eradicating poisonous plants.
- (8) Combat the effects of disease, or the ailments of domestic animals.
- (9) Prevent if possible the introduction and spread of such pests and disease.
- (10) To publish all necessary information likely to be helpful to landholders.

In the early years of the Bureau there were but few official technical advisers in agriculture, and consequently branches made free use of the services of members of the Central Bureau, most of whom were specialists in some branch of agriculture. Members gave their services free of charge, addressed branch meetings and in other ways assisted in the educational work of the organisation.

In the first year the Bureau pursued its aims effectively by dealing with such subjects as improvement of dairying practices, moves to obtain Phylloxera - resistant vines, export of fruit, the sparrow menace, Hessian fly and Noxious Weeds, Coast Disease, Beekeeping, and Water Conservation, Seeds were also sent out for testing.

#### BRANCH ESTABLISHMENT

From April, 1888 to April, 1889 thirteen branches were formed.

Angaston	21/5/1888	Kanmantoo	9/7/1888
Burra	21/5/1888	Gladstone	13/8/1888
Mannum	21/5/1888	Davenport	17/9/1888
Stansbury	21/5/1888	Mt. Gambier	8/10/1888
Millicent	6/6/1888	Pt. Germein	1/4/1888
Gumeracha	9/7/1888	Naracoorte	6/4/1888
		Mt. Pleasant	15/4/1889

From May, 1889 the following Branches were formed:

Pt. Lincoln	20/5/1889	Clinton Centre	19/6/1891
Melrose	17/6/1889	Paskeville	19/6/1891
Maitland	3/6/1889	Narridy	20/7/1891
Stirling East	3/6/1899	Yacka	20/7/1891
Woodside	1/7/1889	Eudunda	7/9/1891
Willunga	15/7/1889	Richmans Crk.	16/11/1891
Balaklava	19/8/1889	Pine Forest	16/11/1891
Golden Grove	17/9/1889	Wasleys	23/11/1891
Finnis	7/10/1889	Wilmington	18/1/1892
Pt. Pirie	7/10/1889	Dawson	29/2/1892
Minlaton	4/11/1889	Jamestown	14/3/1892
Tatiara	2/12/1889	Meadows	17/6/1892
Riverton	6/12/1889	Colton	4/7/1892
Penola	6/1/1890	Gawler River	4/7/1892
Hahndorf	3/2/1890	Mylor	18/7/1892
Strathalbyn	3/3/1890	Terowie	1/8/1892
Renmark	17/3/1890	Red Hill	1/8/1892
Auburn	19/5/1890	Lynoch	15/8/1892
Petersburg	2/6/1890	Stockport	15/8/1892
Carrieton	16/6/1890	Punjelroo	29/8/1892
Pt. Elliot	16/6/1890	Cherry Gardens	10/10/1892
Nantawarra	30/6/1890	Warooka	10/10/1892
One Tree Hill	30/6/1890	Orroroo	24/10/1892
Pt. Broughton	30/6/1890	Watervale	14/11/1892
Yorketown	21/7/1890	Arden Vale	5/12/1892
Mundoora	1/10/1890	Tanunda	5/12/1892
Appila-Wepowie	11/11/1890	Warrow	19/12/1892
Snowtown	17/11/1890	Caurnamont	27/2/1893
Arthurton	6/4/1891	Quorn	10/4/1893
Clare	6/4/1891	Hawker	4/5/1893
Upper Sturt	20/4/1891	Robertstown	22/5/1893
Kadina	4/5/1891	Milang	3/7/1893

Branch Establishment (Cont.)

Mt. Bryan East	17/7/1893	Dukeman	6/9/1897
Baroota whim	14/8/1893	Forster	18/10/1897
Bute	14/8/1893	Koolunga	22/11/1897
Hartley	11/9/1893	Brinkworth	18/4/1898
Woolundnya	29/1/1894	Franklin Harbour	18/4/1898
Cradock	2/7/1894	Caltowie	17/8/1898
Kapunda	2/7/1894	Meningie	24/10/1898
Mt. Remarkable	6/2/1895	Morphettvale	14/12/1898
New Era	20/2/1895	Waudearah	17/5/1899
Murray Bridge	20/2/1895	Mallala	21/6/1899
Yankalilla	20/2/1895	Wilson	16/8/1899
Boothby	6/3/1895	Bakara	20/9/1899
Lyrup	24/4/1895	Booleroo Centre	20/6/1900
Albert	24/4/1895	Rhine Villa	20/8/1900
Amyton	15/5/1895	Reeves Plains	15/7/1901
Pyap	15/5/1895	Ardrossan	21/10/1901
Calca	12/6/1895	Kingston	21/10/1901
Johnsburg	18/9/1895	Saddleworth	21/10/1901
Claredon	20/11/1895	Whyte Yarcowie	28/8/1902
Lucindale	18/3/1896	Wepowie	27/5/1903
Crystal Brook	20/5/1896	Morchard	27/5/1903
Mt. Compass	7/10/1896	Virginia	24/6/1903
Holder	17/2/1897	Petna Well	29/7/1903
Lipson	7/4/1897	Denial Bay	29/7/1903
Swan Reach	7/4/1897	Queenscliffe	30/9/1903
Belair	21/4/1897	Utera Plains	30/9/1903
Norton Summit	18/7/1897	Koppio	6/9/1904
Forest Range	2/8/1897	Bagster	20/12/1904
		Penong	20/12/1904

The Agricultural Bureau Movement in N.S.W. Began in 1910.

FIRST AGRICULTURAL BUREAU CONGRESS

The first Congress of the Agricultural Bureau was held in the Concert-hall of the Jubilee Exhibition Buildings, North Terrace, from Tuesday, 4th March, to Friday, 7th March, 1890. It was attended by representatives of nearly everyone of the twenty-nine branches.

Papers were given on a variety of Agricultural topics.

FIRST DISTRICT CONFERENCE

The first District Conference which was initiated by Appila-Yarrowie Branch was held at Gladstone Institute on Wednesday, 15th March, 1892 from 2 p.m. until 9 p.m.

The attendance of 28 included the General Secretary and delegates from eight branches.

The programme included a visit to the experimental station at Booborowie to inspect the silo pits and lucerne paddocks and discussions on cows and ensilage. Papers were given on the "Proper Time to Plant Trees" and "A Farmer's Cottage Garden".



JOURNAL OF AGRICULTURE

The first publication containing official records of the work of the Bureau was published in 1889 and was known as the Journal of the Bureau of Agriculture. The present Journal of the Department of Agriculture took its place in 1897.

THE ORIGIN OF THE DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

The origin of the Department of Agriculture as a separate body is rather obscure but perhaps may be said to date back to July, 1881, when J.D. Custance was appointed Professor of Agriculture. At that time he seemed to be on his own, but responsible, as early officers in Agriculture were, to the Commissioner of Crown Lands.

Roseworthy Agricultural College was opened before the Central Bureau was founded, and in addition to providing education for students, began carrying out experimental work in Agriculture.

Custance resigned in 1886 and Lowrie was appointed in 1887 and stayed until 1901, when he went to New Zealand.

Professor Towar was appointed to take Lowrie's place in May, 1902, and A.J. Perkins was appointed Secretary of Agriculture in August of the same year. In some ways Perkin's job seems to have been somewhat similar to that later called Director of Agriculture, but with very restricted staff numbers.

Towar resigned as Principal of Roseworthy Agricultural College and Professor of Agriculture in June, 1904, and these two positions were separated. Perkins was appointed Principal of Roseworthy Agricultural College in August, 1904, (dropping the position of Secretary of Agriculture at the same time).

Angus was appointed Professor of Agriculture and Secretary for Agriculture in 1904 but did not arrive in South Australia until December 1905. It would appear that the Department in its present form began at this time because Angus signed the Annual Report of 1905/6 as Director.

A.E.V. Richardson as appointed assistant Director in 1908/9 and in November, 1909, W.J. Colebatch was appointed Superintendent of Agriculture in the South East, Angus being relieved of responsibility for that part of the State. About this time the Ministry of Agriculture became a separate Cabinet portfolio and W.L. Summers was appointed Secretary.

In 1913-14 Angus resigned and Perkins was appointed Director of Agriculture in July, 1914. He retired on 10th May, 1936, and Mr. W.J. Spafford was appointed the day after. He retired in 1949 and Dr. A.R. Callaghan was appointed Director.

In 1901 the Journal of Agriculture was being printed and it appears that there were one or more dairy and horticultural instructors and a fruit inspector in the Department.

Certainly the First dairy instructor was George Sutherland Thompson who was appointed 1887/88.

Origin of Department of Agriculture (cont.)

Without knowing when it all started by 1924 there were in addition to the Director (at least the following):-

- (1) Superintendent of experiment work.
- (2) Dairy Expert (Herd testing was being carried out).
- (3) Poultry expert (and Parafield Poultry Station).
- (4) Chief Horticultural Instructor  
+ Fruit Inspectors  
+ Orchard Instructors  
+ 4 Government Orchards.
- (5) Inspector of Hay, Chaff, Fertilisers, Insecticides, etc., and some plant quarantine services.
- (6) Government experimental farms at

Minnipa  
Booborowie  
Veitch  
Turretfield  
Kybybolite (Started 1905-6)

At the present time there are 11 Departmental Research Centres:-

Turretfield  
Kybybolite  
Minnipa  
Wanbi  
Parndana  
Milang  
Parafield  
Blackwood  
Berri  
Nuriootpa  
Loxton

(Booborowie and Veitch were sold during the depression about 1933)

In 1926 the first Agricultural Instructors were appointed to five districts:

- (1) Central
- (2) Northern
- (3) Murray Mallee
- (4) Western
- (5) South Eastern

Subsequently more appointments have been made.

More or less parallel with the early interest in Agriculture by the Government an outbreak of sheep scab in about 1860 brought about the appointment of sheep inspectors and a Government Veterinary Officer under the Commissioner of Crown Lands. This eventually grew into the Stock and Brands Department which stayed a separate entity until about 1944. Then it was bought in under the Department of Agriculture.