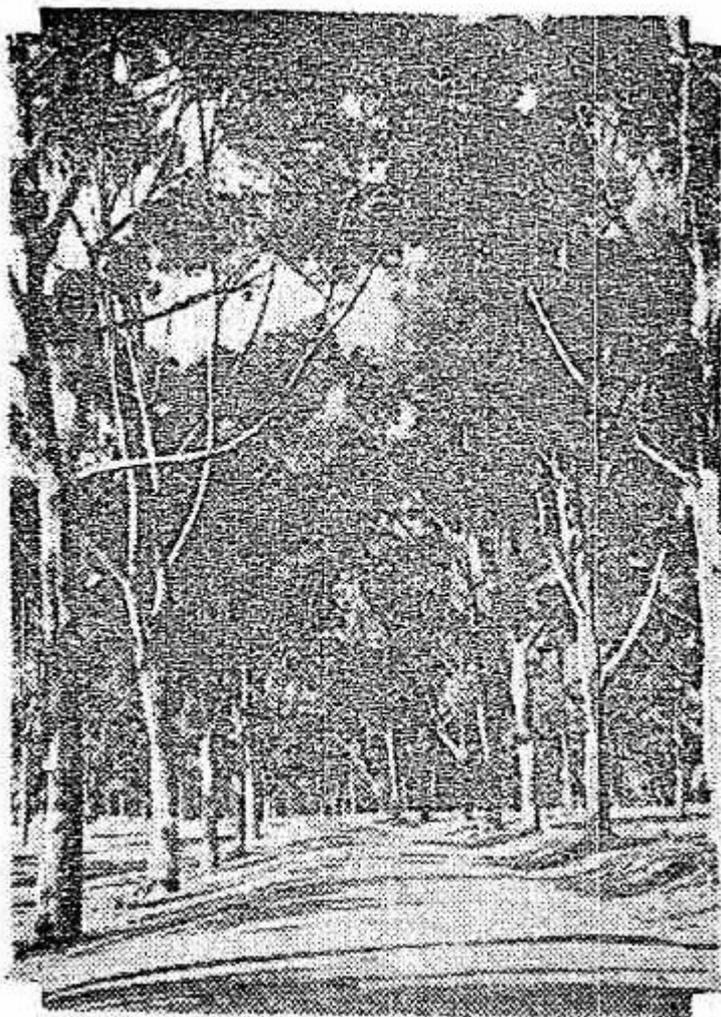


ARCADY IN THE HILLS

National Park and Projected Improvements



STRIKING AVENUE OF GUMS on the way through the park to Long Gully.

THE National Park Commissioners are making a nine-hole golf course on a stretch of level land along the Upper Start road, or, to state the location more explicitly to those who know the park, a few hundred yards beyond the Ti Tree Oval. Mr. Hodge, the curator, hopes to have the course open before the end of next winter.

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This venture will be a revenue earner from the start, as the Blackwood Golf Club has undertaken to make the course its headquarters and to erect a clubhouse. The commissioners believe it will be more than a revenue earner; that, in fact, it will be a profit maker in that it will attract parties in the winter, some of whom will play golf and pay for the privilege, while others will hire the arbors and the tennis courts if they are dry. Anyhow, the commissioners are on a winner in making a golf course. People will travel miles to have a smack at a golf ball.

If this enterprise turns out to be the financial success anticipated the commissioners will escape the hand-to-mouth policy they have had to adopt. When the State Treasurer brought the pruning knife out of its sheath he slashed off with the £500 set aside for expenditure at the park. That left the commissioners relying upon revenue to meet the expenditure involved in maintenance. By the strictest economy they have balanced the budget.

Parliament recently debated a proposal that in order to raise more revenue for the park the commissioners be empowered to make a charge on all motors as they enter. The proposal was accepted but the commissioners have not made the charge and it is doubtful if they will. The result of a toll might be to keep people away, whereas the commissioners want them to come along and enjoy this elysium at their doorsteps, and to encourage them to do that they are providing this additional attraction of a golf course.

It has been suggested that a magnet to draw people to the park would be a swimming pool. Water is available at a spring. There is no doubt that the provision of a pool in which to have a dip after a strenuous tennis singles would be greatly appreciated. Some people, however, might consider that the presence of girls in gaily colored beach pyjamas and of hairy-chested men in scanty attire was out of keeping with the quiet charm of the park.

Patronage of the park is good in the summer months, mostly on Sundays, and on some holidays it is exceptionally heavy. For the holiday on the twenty-ninth of this month every oval, arbor, and tennis court has been booked already. Many applications have been refused.

DREAM OF MR. GOOCH

But for a Mr. Walter Gooch the present generation of South Australians might never have experienced the joys of this fine recreation reserve with

tion of South Australians might never have experienced the joys of this fine recreation reserve, with its wooded dells and sunny hillsides. He not only suggested that it be set aside for that purpose, but he worked hard until his objective was reached.

When he went to live at Belair in 1877 the place was a Government farm, which was used mostly for grazing police horses and for supplying timber from the native trees. There was no railway to Belair in those days. Consequently few persons know of the farm.

Mr. Gooch decided that in order to have this Arcady proclaimed as a reserve he must get prominent men interested. What he did was to button-hole everybody whom he thought could help him

and invite them to his home on Saturdays. It was slow work, as he could show only three or four round at a time.

The Hon. T. Playford came forward with a proposal to cut the farm into small blocks. He was one of the strongest opponents of dedication of the place as a reserve. Mr. Gooch, with the aid of some friends, prepared a memorial opposing the suggestion of Mr. Playford, and it was presented to the then Commissioner of Crown Lands (Hon. A. C. Catt) on January 10, 1882. The memorial cost £13, nearly all of which Mr. Gooch met out of his own pocket.

As a result of that memorial a Bill prohibiting the sale of the Government farm was introduced the same year and passed; but it was rejected in the Legislative Council. In the following year it was passed. Eight years later—in 1891—a Bill dedicating National Park was assented to, and Mr. Gooch saw the realisation of his dream. He served future generations better than he knew. Motor cars on smooth-faced bituminous roads now lift the visitor up over the hills into the park in less than 30 minutes. In Mr. Gooch's day the journey was by slow, horse-drawn vehicles along macadamised roads.

It was fortunate that the National Park Commissioners found in their first curator, Mr. Sanders, a surveyor who was also a true tree lover. He left the giant gums and wattles as they were and placed the imported trees among them where they could be most effective. The result today is a wealth of noble trees, shrubs, and flowers.

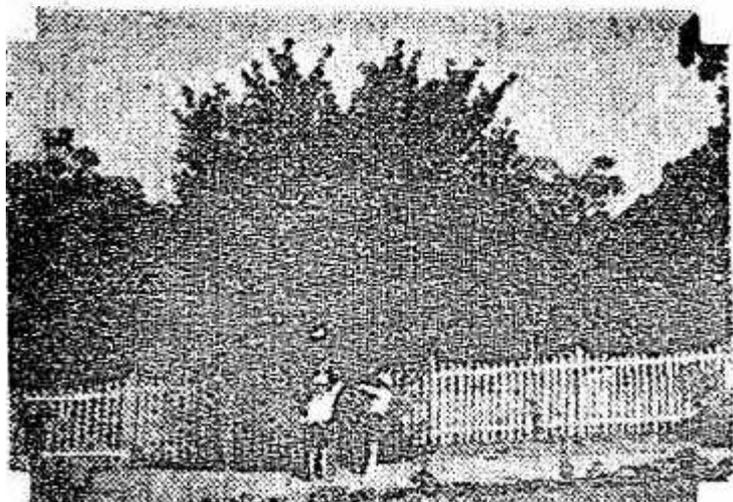
TREES WILL BE NAMED

It is recognised by the commissioners that the trees should be named. Most of us know the plane, the oak, and the ash trees, and the gums and wattles, but there are scores of trees of which those who have not delved into botany have no know-

wattles, but there are scores of trees of which those who have not delved into botany have no knowledge. The trees will be indicated with their colloquial and botanical names, and the date when they were planted, as soon as time and money are available. This will be a decided improvement, as most of us are curious enough to want to know the name of a tree which is giving such welcome shelter from the heat.

At this time of the year the prunus plum, with its delicate copper-colored leaf shining in the sunlight is a source of admiration; the flame tree is in flower (it is later in the park than in the suburbs); the red-flowering gum is out in blossom, and the bottle brush is giving a touch of red to a background of green. All the trees are in full leaf. The naming of each of them would be a means of instruction to a host of tree lovers, young and old.

No tree planting has been done since 1925. Japanese maple and Japanese cherry—which, by the way, make a beautiful sight in the spring—were planted in Sparks Gully, an area of 15 acres at the top of Long Gully, in 1922. This part is called Victory Remembrance. The trees for this plantation were presented by Mr. Francis Snow. It is not proposed to plant any more imported trees, but to make a show of eucalypti and acacias along the Upper Sturt road, where the golf course is to be laid out.



THE PRUNUS PLUM, with its copper colored leaf, is one of the most attractive in the park.

This is a rather ambitious project, for the plan is to include one of every variety of gums and wattles, from the mighty karri and jarrah down to the stunted mallee known to Australia. People will then have a rare opportunity to see their native trees side by side.

One of the most potent of the park's attractions is the provision of earth tennis courts and cricket

One of the most peculiar of the park's arrangements is the provision of earth tennis courts and cricket pitches. The tennis courts are remarkable in this that they are never watered and rolled and yet always have a hard surface. The only attention they receive is at the beginning of the season, when the surface for a depth of one eighth of an inch is skimmed off. Some have been toppedressed to bring them back to the right height. They are made of marle—a mixture of lime and clay—which sets so hard that a ball striking them leaves no impression. The commissioners are fortunate in having on hand such suitable material for court building.

With the construction of the golf course and the naming of the profusion of imported trees which flourish on the flats in between sloping rugged banks of gums, the commissioners are helping to make the park what its dreamer dreamt it should be—a place of recreation among the beauties of Nature and within handy distance from the city.