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ROSEWORTHY COLLEGE.

NEW PRINCIPAL ARRIVES.

IMPORTANCE OF FARMERS'
SCHOOLS.

Mr. W. R. Birks, who will succeed Mr. W. J. Colebatch as principal of Roseworthy Agricultural College, arrived in Adelaide on Tuesday from Melbourne, and will take up his duties at the end of the week. Mr. Birks is himself a Roseworthy graduate, and five and a half years ago, after service in the agricultural departments of South Australia and New South Wales, he was appointed principal of Dookie Agricultural College, Victoria.

Discussing his experiences in other States with a representative of "The Advertiser," Mr. Birks remarked that Roseworthy was recognised all over Australia as being a particularly sound institution, as well as the oldest agricultural college. He himself had instituted Rose-

worthy methods in various departments at Dookie, and had come to the conclusion that the instruction provided at Roseworthy compared favorably with that obtainable anywhere else in Australia.

"It is not easy to follow such men as Professor Perkins and Mr. Colebatch," he said. "That, as a matter of fact, is the main feature in the history of the college. It has always been in the hands of trained men, which accounts for the thoroughness of the tuition. Moreover, it is as liberally supported by the Government as any college in Australia. Dookie, which trains a good many more students, actually receives less net financial assistance from the Government than Roseworthy. The latter has always been most sympathetically treated by the State Government."

The attendance at Roseworthy, he said, bore about the same ratio to the population of the State as was the case in Victoria, but the figure was probably higher than in New South Wales. Mr. Birks has a great regard for the system of "extension courses" in the form of annual farmers' schools, which are a bigger feature in Victoria than in this State. He said he had had as many as 150 extra people, including extra instructors, at Dookie during the annual farmers' school. There and at Gatton College (Queensland) tractors played a prominent part in the course, and appeared to attract a great many farmers to the school. At Dookie there was no age limit for attendance at the farmers' school, and Mr. Birks said he had even had them in knickerbockers. He found the younger lads remarkably keen learners, although they were naturally a little more trouble. "Nothing to speak of," he said, "only we have to make them put the football away at the right time and stop them from going to dances during the course."

One of the most gratifying features of his new appointment was the number of letters he had received from old Roseworthy students. One found them in all States, all doing well.

Mr. Birks has admirably fitted himself for the post of principal of Roseworthy College by researches, since the war, into wheat growing and plant breeding, in the course of which he visited Denmark, Sweden, Canada, America, and New Zealand, and spent three months in the laboratories at Cambridge. At Roseworthy, where he took the full course, he obtained the gold medal as dux of the diploma class, and, after completing his B.Sc. course at the Adelaide University, he returned to the college in 1910 as demonstrator, and carried out original research work on the effects of superphosphates on germination. After the war, during which he gained his commission with the Field Artillery, he organised an agricultural training depot on Salisbury Plain in connection with the A.I.F. educational service.