

objection indicated a strange lack of imagination. The school was a society of individuals, and the life of a school displayed in a concrete and visible form the existence of those principles to which he had referred as operative in the life of the State. If at first the State seemed remote and abstract to the youth, he could be led on to realise its character, and the nature of his relations to it, by being first familiarised with the phenomena of social life nearer at hand. Symbolism could serve the teacher in this as in other departments. The American practice of teaching the pupil to salute the national flag was but one of many illustrations of the use of symbols as a means of inculcating a sense of civic dignity and responsibility. If they could get children interested in the study of politics at school, they would be much more likely to go on taking an interest in the study after they had left. Their age was one of democratic institutions. The democratic movement practically began and was completed in the nineteenth century. No one adequately realised the enormous possibilities of that movement for good and for evil. They not only asked the masses to elect representatives, but they invited them to decide upon the deeper issues of national policy. The problems of life to-day—social, economic, and political—grew each year in number and complexity. These problems were not remote, they involved the most vital interests of the community and the citizen. He sometimes wondered what the historian of the future would have to say of those who lived amidst such fair scenes. When he looked at the horizon of the future, he saw the dark menace of grave dangers which were even now taking shape. He saw a great people passing through strange ordeals, which would put its intelligence and its virtue to tests so severe that the ultimate issue was impossible to foretell. And he turned from that vision of the future to ask what citizens of to-day were doing to prepare themselves to cope with the problems which lie before them. But the answer he must leave to those who had the citizens in the making. (Cheers.)

Register, July 2/11.

THE UNIVERSITY OF ADELAIDE.

A meeting of the council was held on Friday at 3 p.m. Present—The Chancellor, the Vice-Chancellor, Rev. H. Girdlestone, Messrs. G. Brookman, F. Chapple, W. J. Isbister, G. J. R. Murray, S. Talbot Smith, S. J. Jacobs, Professors Stirling, Rennie, and Mitchell, and Dr. Hayward. The report of the Faculty of Medicine submitting revised list of marks for the examinations for the M.B. and B.S. degree was adopted, and the recommendation that they be published for the information of students was approved. The report of the Faculty of Music recommending that the University should bear portion of the expense of a visit of a representative of the combined universities to New Zealand in connection with the extension of the scheme of public examinations was adopted.

Advertiser, July 4/11.

NEW EDUCATION BILL.

GOVERNMENT PROPOSALS.

OUTLINED BY MR. CONEYBEER.

The Minister of Education, in addressing the Teachers' Conference at the School of Mines on Monday evening, dealt chiefly with the provisions of the new Education Bill which he intends to ask Parliament to sanction during the present session. He said on his recent visit to the eastern States as a member of the Higher Education Commission had taught him that to formulate a complete system of education, unless they built the foundations securely in the primary schools, the superstructure would be unsound, and therefore that the carefully-prepared Bill of last year was not in advance of their needs. If his fondest wishes were realised by the Bill being passed by Parliament it would be of the greatest service to the education of the children of the State, and would for the rest of his life give him the profoundest satisfaction that he had assisted in making it law.

Essentials of the Bill.

In it were consolidated the essential principles of the five Education Acts of the years 1875, 1878, 1879, 1891, and 1905, and in addition it embodied the experience of 36 years of working under their own system, and also what they learnt from other States. They must all realise that their schools existed only because they embodied the desires of the people of South Australia. They were called public schools, because it was the people who had created them, the people who supported them, and the children of the people who were taught in them. (Cheers.) How could they bring the influence of the people most effectively into the schools? They had retained their boards of advice, whose disinterested services in the past had perhaps never been adequately recognised, and in addition they would give the people the opportunity to organise a school committee to watch over the welfare of any single school. Such a committee would be appointed only with the consent of the board of advice of the district, and would then undertake the powers exercised by the board for the particular school. In many districts it would give an opportunity to parents and others to take a more direct interest in the schools of their neighborhood. Councils of not less than six members would be appointed to watch over the destinies of high and technical schools.

The Compulsory Age.

An important change would be noted in Part II., which dealt with the compulsory age at which children should attend school. The time was past when any civilised community debated whether it was right to enforce compulsory attendance at school. But they had now to consider what was the lowest age at which a child could be allowed to leave school, so that he had received the irreducible minimum of training for a citizen of South Australia. During the past 36 years the compulsory age had been 13 years, but the time had come when it should be 14 years. In New South Wales 14 years had been the law since 1882, and it had been so in Victoria since 1905. Could South Australia afford to have its future citizens below the educational standard of its neighbors? The standard of education had also been raised in the Bill, and under it it would be necessary for a child to pass the fifth class in reading, writing, arithmetic, drawing, dictation, and composition. If they succeeded in raising the age and the standard of competency they would have an opportunity of rearranging their curriculum, in some classes at least, so as to make the work easier for pupils and teachers. Ample provision had been made in the Bill to allow the carrying out of its compulsory provisions with justice tempered by mercy. Sickness or poverty would be considered sufficient misfortune for a parent to labor under without adding to his burdens by prosecuting him for the unavoidable non-attendance of his child at school, but the parent who tried to dodge the facilities offered him for his children would be sternly dealt with. Wealth could be produced in abundance in South Australia without child labor. To increase the wealth of their State by leaps and bounds it was required adequately to educate their children so that they might grow up with both minds and bodies trained to change their vast resources into wealth.

Rights of Private Schools.

Another important part of section IV. dealt with the relations between the Education Department and private schools. South Australia was founded by men who were strongly impressed with the evils of interfering with the liberty of conscience, and although in the early days they, following the customs of the older States of Australia, gave slight financial aid to religious bodies, this was the first State in Australia, if not in the Empire, to sever the connection between State and Church. For those who, for conscientious reasons, preferred to send their children to schools conducted on sectarian lines he had every respect. They made sacrifices to support schools which could not form part of a national system of education. The rights of private schools were not interfered with by the Bill; there were few countries where private schools had the same liberty granted to them as was allowed in South Australia. But they could not allow private schools to be used as a subterfuge for children of parents who wished to evade the compulsory clauses. To what extent that had been done in the past he was unable to say, but there was a rift which must be closed if all children were to receive the heritage given them by a civilised State. Every private school would be asked to furnish monthly returns to the Education Department, giving the attendances of all pupils who were between the compulsory ages, and a refusal to grant such a modest request would, on a conviction at a local court, be punished with a fine. But he could safely prophesy that there would be no fines inflicted; the assistance asked for from teachers of private schools was light, and the advantages they would gain by having better attendance at their schools would compensate them for the time spent in filling up a few forms supplied by the Education Department.

Higher Education and Technical Schools.

Higher primary and high schools were for pupils who had gained the fifth class certificate of the primary school. Manual training courses for boys would supply a branch of education which had been neglected. He expressed his satisfaction at domestic economy being one of the subjects taught to girls. The country Schools of Mines were termed in the Bill technical schools. The reason for changing the name was obvious; the mines were far away from all except two of the schools, and the nature of the knowledge imparted was not confined to mining. Clause 61 would give the Minister power to provide board and lodging for children who by reason of the remoteness of their homes would not otherwise be able to attend school. Power was also given by another clause to appoint public school medical and dental officers, health inspectors, and nurses to attend pupils. (Cheers.) The Bill was urgently required to register a much-needed advance in the work. Since last he met them he had persuaded his colleagues materially to increase the salaries of the teachers in the State, and they were now feeling the benefit which had resulted in part from the seasons of prosperity which had blessed this State, but also in part, from an altered public opinion, which had allowed the Government to pay their teachers more adequately. (Cheers.) Since those regulations were passed still further alterations had been made, especially in connection with the salary of assistants, and by a much-needed provision for the increased payment of provisional teachers. The conditions of the bursaries and exhibitions had also been altered, and the first step had been taken to deal with the problem of continuation schools. Under the new regulation making a provisional school one with an average attendance of not less than 5, the teachers would know that they would receive a fixed salary of £80 per annum, and after one year's work that salary would be raised to £100 if their work was satisfactory. In the case of men the salary would be for the first year £100, and for the second year £120. A few of the men would receive salaries up to £140 per annum. The alterations which had taken place in connection with senior exhibitions and Government bursaries enabled the children of parents with small incomes to accept bursaries, which previously were not available on account of expense, and to send smart boys and girls to measure their strength in the struggle for pre-eminence amongst the leaders and future rulers of the State.

Other Scholarships.

Two scholarships of greater value had been awarded. There would probably not be one dissentient voice when he said that up to the present the services of the late Hon. T. Price to the Education Department had never been adequately recognised. (Cheers.) The matter had lain in abeyance for some time. That great woman, Miss Spence, died, and a movement was started to perpetuate her memory. When the matter was brought before him, he felt that it was his duty to say that his late