

The Daily  
Herald  
October 20<sup>th</sup> 1913

## WORKERS' EDUCATION

ADDRESS BY MR. MANSBRIDGE

AT BOTANIC PARK.

Mr. A. Mansbridge, M.A., secretary of the Workers' Educational Association, Great Britain, addressed a meeting in the Botanic Park yesterday under the auspices of the Botanic Park Labor Regulation League. Mr. W. G. Clough, organising secretary of the league, occupied the chair.

Mr. Mansbridge prefaced his remarks by referring to the work of the organisation in the mother country. Education, he said, sounded rather a dry subject to some people, especially when they associated the subject with their early schooldays and the administration of corporal punishment to pupils. But education had developed enormously in the State schools during the last 10 years. In his youth he learned all about the capes and gulfs of Australia, but nothing whatever about Australia itself. That system of tuition had given way to a more rational system, and now scholars were taught something of the peoples of the countries. He urged the establishment of an educational system which would promote physical and mental strength, and encourage the movement of men towards one another, so that it would be realised that an injury to one meant an injury of the whole of society. Education on right lines would not mean merely the survival of the fittest, but the consideration of the interest of all. Education properly applied would compel the fittest to care for the weak, so that the weakest would have as good a time as the strongest member of the community. It was not the amount of education but the quality that was required, and it was the bounden duty of every man and every woman to make the best of themselves for the benefit of the community, both physically, morally, and spiritually. Every bit of thought which a man or woman gave to the problems of the time was one step towards the solving of those problems.

It did not matter what intellect the son possessed if he would give proper thought to the problems of the day. Much of the human suffering was due to the human brain having been allowed to drift aimlessly, and it was the duty of every man and every woman to do the best they could with their brains by turning them on to the things that were not true, false, or vile. He urged everyone to start the higher education by making the best use of his own brain power, which needed no subsidy and no legislation; it was the province of every man and every woman to develop the brain, and to do this they had no need to ask any person's permission, as it was their own doing as they pleased with. Incidentally touching on the movement at home, he pointed out that seven-eighths of the population of England were the workers, and if seven-eighths of the people got on the right lines it did not matter much what the other one-eighth did. Equality of opportunity could not be obtained in any state without equality of opportunity in education, and this would only come by people putting their best into the idea. This question had been thought out in England, and in regard to workers he held that everyone was a worker who did anything that was for the good of the community. He was not going to invent any term for the man who did nothing for the good of the community. There was no difficulty in the world which the people could not overcome if they only put their minds and spirits to work in the right direction. Their movement in England had been organised on non-party and unsectarian lines, and the tenth annual meeting was held in Leeds the previous day, when delegates were present representing 216 branches, and when they remember that the co-operative movement, with its 2,000,000 odd members, was included in that number, they would realise how great an interest was being taken in the workers' education movement.

One night in a Lancashire town, when the snow and the elements were so great as to stop all traffic, out of 33 students on the roll, 23 attended one of the Manchester University classes, and not one of the six women members was absent. One was a dairymaid, and had travelled for three-quarters of an hour through a foot of snow. (Applause.) Women in factories were attending at the universities but he hoped that the time was not far distant when women would not be found working at soul-destroying occupations in the factories of England, Australia, or any other civilised country. In a North London suburb a number of railway men met in one of their colleagues' front parlor on a Sunday, and were taught from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. by a university teacher. The education authorities sent their inspector down, and he reported that the department could not grant a subsidy to the class as there was not sufficient air space for the pupils. That gave the pupils a splendid lever to use, and they used it to such effect that they had now for some time had a satisfactory room to carry out their studies in. Turning to Australia the speaker said he considered himself lucky that he had been able to spend 13 weeks in the Commonwealth. He had received welcomes from the Trades Halls and workers of Australia far greater than he had ever anticipated and he had been gladly received by the universities. He had done all he could to unite the mental toilers with the manual toilers, the scholars with the men of the handicrafts, so that they would follow on the lines of the English organisation.

In Queensland a workers' educational organisation had been brought into being and a university class would soon be established. The demand in Sydney was so great that they were going to establish six classes. Melbourne and Hobart were following on similar lines, and Western Australia was following suit. In Adelaide the universities, School of Mines, Education Department, and workers had also been at work, and soon there would be a report published. If any man desired to associate with the movement he should send his name on to Mr. T. B. Merry at the Trades Hall. If the working people of England had risen in the demand for education, then it was doubly necessary that the workers of Australia should rise and make similar demands in their own interests. The search for gold was not the only search, but to quote the Prime Minister of England:—"When a man or woman knows how to read books they will not barter their knowledge for a king's ransom." England was looking to Australia, and what the Commonwealth did would, he hoped, be such as would make a light for the workers for all time. (Applause.)

Senator Newland expressed his pleasure at having heard Mr. Mansbridge's remarks, and hoped that his stay in South Australia would be such as would encourage him to proceed even further with his good work.

Representative E. A. Roberts, M.H.R., prefaced his remarks by thanking Mr. Mansbridge for the address he had delivered, and was glad to understand that the movement he represented aimed at the elevation of the whole of the nation. His devout hope was that Mr. Mansbridge would succeed in his mission.

A vote of thanks to the speaker was moved by Mr. E. Yates and carried by acclamation.

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## WOMEN, WORKERS AND EDUCATION.

ADDRESS BY MRS. MANSBRIDGE.

Mrs. Mansbridge, whose husband is the secretary of the Workers' Educational Association of Great Britain, was introduced to the members of the W.N.P.P.A. at the May Club on Friday afternoon. Mrs. Mansbridge has no official position in the association, but it is manifest that she is imbued with the spirit of the movement. As her husband stands for the workers generally, so she stands especially for the cause of women's education. In her talk the lecturer explained how the association had originated. The idea had come from the workers themselves, and upon that fact depended much of the success of the movement. The workers had felt the growing need of a better and wider education than they had had or could possibly get in conditions then existing. They had appealed to various organisations, including the co-operative and friendly societies, the trade unions, women's associations, and colleges, and the universities for help in devising some scheme by which they might obtain the education they wanted. As a result of this appeal a combined conference was held, the outcome of which was the inauguration of the Workers' Educational Association.

In the working of the association care had been taken never to lose sight of the fact that the demand had come from the workers, and that the knowledge for which they asked was not extended to them in a spirit of patronage, but as a right which they shared with all classes. The idea was to encourage them to think for themselves and to inspire and stimulate them in their awakening. Wherever classes were desired they were formed. The students in each class chose their own subjects, and the association saw to it that none but the best teachers, men and women on equal pay, were supplied to give the necessary instruction. These classes were open to all on a common basis. Equal opportunities to join were afforded men and women of any status. The fees for the course of lectures were fixed at a figure low enough to admit the very poorest.

The provision of equal voting power for all students helped further to promote that spirit of fellowship which was the secret of their success. The doing away with class distinction made possible a better understanding and greater sympathy between all concerned in the movement.

Mrs. Mansbridge went on to tell how wonderfully harmoniously the system was working. College men opened their rooms to such of the worker students as could take advantage of the summer schools held during the college vacations. All sorts met and amalgamated happily—professors and domestic workers, college men and laborers. Many were the discussions after the lectures, and the expositions of different points of view. Mutual benefit was being derived from these classes: not only were the workers gaining the knowledge they needed, but the professors and college men realised what an incalculable good it was to them to get a real insight into the experience of the practical workers. Previously the worker had not been able to express himself and make clear his point of view; now that was possible. In time it must mean much to the welfare of the nation to have the theoretical man working in unison with the practical man, the professor with the artisan, both realising that they had much to learn from each other. The speaker dwelt on the keenness of the students and how they overcame great disadvantages to attend regularly. Factory girls and women after working long hours a day in unfavorable circumstances for 4/ a week made the effort to get to the classes at night.

One class in the East-End, comprised of coster-women and dock laborers' wives, some of whom were 50 and 60 years old, and one of whom was 70 years of age, was formed for the study of history. Many of these had families that could not be left unattended, so they took turns to look after joint households so that all might have the opportunity to attend the class. Women were recognising more and more their responsibility to the children and the need for a higher education with which to meet it. They were realising, too, a need for a wider knowledge of things beyond their homes, to make them comrades with their man-folk and fit them for their rightful place in human affairs.