

The Daily Herald
Carried 23.9.13.

The Register
September 23rd 1913

had no money. In England the students fixed the fee at 2/6 for 24 lessons. In Sydney students who were considering the formation of a class fixed it at 5/ for the same number of lessons, and in Melbourne the same rate was fixed. The reason for this was no doubt that there was more money in Australia. (Laughter.) In Australia the students would perhaps have to find their own books, but in England the association sold the books at special prices. If a student were too poor to buy a book the association gave him one. In one of the English universities they had a class of women—the poorest working women—who were studying history. Fourteen of them were over 50, five over 60, and one over 70. They had studied keenly and industriously, and it was surprising at the quickness with which they gained knowledge. It was said that one of them started because she wanted to find out if Alfred the Great were dead. (Laughter.) It was a peculiar fact that many hesitated to join a class because they did not know enough about the subject which they desired to learn. It was the ignorant and the simple that they wanted to teach those who wished to acquire knowledge. The intending student had to give a promise that he would take a three-years' course and not miss a lesson unless he was compelled by some unforeseen circumstance. Overtime was the curse of many a man's progress. (Applause.) It prevented hundreds being able to attend to better educate themselves. Women had shown a keen desire to learn. They had married women as members of their association who devoted long hours to study. These poor creatures spent all the day working in factories. (Cries of "Shame.") It was a shame, and he hoped the time would quickly come when married women would be prevented from working in a factory. (Applause.) These women, together with working men, had done better work than the work of the undergraduates of the

university. Fully 75 per cent. of working people got first-class honors at a recent examination. They surpassed the student who had practically spent all his life in studying. They did better than the man who had graduated from the primary school to the university. Years ago university professors never dreamt that such could possibly be the case. To-day it was a positive fact. The spelling of the working man or woman was not, perhaps, as good as that of the undergraduate. But what did that matter? To-day they had the Simplified Spelling Society. There were Americanisms and Australianisms until it was so mixed that the child now attending the primary school might be at a loss to understand any. He had received word that day that a class was to be started in Brisbane. In Sydney two classes were about to be formed, and the Government had placed aside a sum for the university to construct these classes. There was a similar movement in Victoria, and even Tasmanian working men and women were forming a class. (Applause.) He therefore had little doubt as to what Adelaide was going to do.

In moving a vote of thanks to the speaker, the Commissioner of Crown Lands (Hon. F. W. Young) said he was favorably impressed with the practicability of the scheme and promised to give it every encouragement. He had no doubt that although a class might start in Adelaide small in number, it was sure to grow, and would follow steady in the steps of the older body in England.

Mr. T. Ryan, in seconding the motion, remarked that a commission had presented its report to Parliament on educational matters of this State, and it would be considered by the members of the House of Assembly on Tuesday. He was of opinion that if it were adopted fully half of the suggestions made by Mr. Mansbridge would be carried out, and the council of the university would be transformed into that democratic body which the speaker had advocated.

The Director of Education (Mr. M. M. Maughan) heartily supported the motion.

EDUCATING THE WORKERS.

A LAUDABLE MOVEMENT.

INSPIRING UNIVERSITY ADDRESS.

Mr. Albert Mansbridge, M.A., founder and Secretary of the Workers' Educational Association of England, is a man of striking personality. Ten years ago he became impressed with the idea that there was a demand for higher education among the working classes, and determined to provide some means whereby his belief could be tested. The Workers' Educational Association was the outcome of his energies, and the movement advanced from its initiation. To-day nearly 9,000 members are united in the furtherance of the cause, and, with the master mind of Mr. Mansbridge as their guide, are wielding an ever-increasing influence toward the welfare of the nation. At the Adelaide University on Monday evening Mr. Mansbridge, who has already toured Brisbane, Sydney, and Melbourne, delivered a most spirited discourse on the aims and methods of the association which he has so much at heart. Among a representative audience present were the Commissioner of Crown Lands (Hon. F. W. Young), the Director of Education (Mr. M. M. Maughan, B.A.), and other educationists, legislators, and prominent trades unionists. Professor Henderson, M.A., presided.

Mr. Mansbridge referred to the great revival in education, for it was nothing less, which was occurring among the working people of England. He addressed himself to the question of the functions of a university from the point of view of the working classes. No State could advance without a university working clearly, freely, and definitely. In England they had lost enormously—and if England lost Australia lost in a significant sense—because, somehow or other, their educational system had not yet developed that power within itself to draw through difficulties the men who were best fitted to advance it. He related the story of a poor railway messenger boy, who, being placed in a position accidentally to compete for a £30 per annum scholarship, won it, and by diligence and self-sacrifice overcame difficulties, gained first-class honours as a Bachelor of Science, and was now a fellow engaged in research work, with a spirit real and splendid—the work of a doctor, whose business was healthgiving, and not merely wealthgetting. (Applause.) The advancement of that young man ought to have happened normally, and not accidentally, because there were many others like him. (Applause.) Any university in any State must, with all the wisdom and power it had, seek to build a real highway of education leading to it, a highway so broad and deep that not even the poorest person might fail to pass along it, if he or she had the necessary brains and character. The time had gone by when any State could allow poverty to keep people out of its university. (Applause.) The three great governing principles of the association he represented were unsectarian, non-party, and democratic. Its members sought not to damage one another, but one another's opinions. He sometimes thought that the perfect society would have people who thought differently, because many minds made up the whole, and no one was ever intended to know everything about everything. The Workers' Educational Association was not for the clever people, but for all people, and it had its education for the most crude capacity. In England they had to meet where they could—often in hotels. Indeed, if there was one thing he was expert in, it was in getting through the bars of public hotels without buying anything. (Laughter.) The foundation of wisdom was the awakening of the sense of wonder. It had been asserted, and if only they could get the working people of England to wonder it was surely the foundation of education. The sense of wonder implied humility, which was sometimes rubbed off

in the rush of things. Although one met many uneducated persons among the workers in England, there were married women who toiled in factories—he hoped the time would come when there would be no married woman in factories—(applause)—who were doing work in with universities which was as good as the best work done by the undergraduates. The speaker proceeded to cite instances of successes achieved by working men who had banded themselves together for the furtherance of their education. Overtime was the curse of the education of adults. In the Workers' Educational Association every one had real freedom, the humblest was not afraid to teach, and the wisest was not too foolish to learn. There was a group of comrades giving of their best, without hindrance to the subject under discussion; so their joy was joy indeed. He had been in Australia for about 10 weeks—he sometimes thought he knew less about Australia now than before he landed—and he had found out that Australian men and women and Australian universities were one and all possessed with a kind of instinctive idea that one of the great steps forward in the near future must be in the direction of education among adults, for the sake of the adults and for the good of the whole community. The demand for education must come from the people, who wanted to study, however, for it was of no use waiting for the university. The people must move first. (Applause.)

At the conclusion of an address notable for the high ideals and great personal magnetism of the speaker, questions were asked by members of the audience. In reply to one enquirer Mr. Mansbridge said the first subjects invariably sought after by workers were industrial history and economics. A lady questioner was informed that men and women were not separated in the classes, for how could any class be successful unless there was a sensible woman in it? (Laughter and Hear, hear.) Some difficulty was experienced in regard to books, but that was being overcome. No examination was asked of a worker who desired to join the classes, but he was pledged to study for three years, and not to stop away unless compelled to do so. There was no grading among the students.

The Hon. F. W. Young, who moved a vote of thanks to the speaker, joined in the view that the success of the movement would depend upon the demand which came from the workers themselves for education. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. T. Ryan seconded. He mentioned that 29 tickets presented to the Trades Hall for the address that night had all been given up at the door.

The Director of Education supported the proposition, which was enthusiastically endorsed.

Mr. Mansbridge, replying, remarked that after all the education of the workers was merely the recovery of an old factor which had prevailed in ancient Greece.