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Continued

ANOTHER METEORITE

£250,000 LESS FOR EDUCATION?

The Advertiser

and Register.

ADELAIDE: WEDNESDAY, JUNE 24, 1931.

COST OF EDUCATION

Although the report of the committee charged with overhauling the department of the Minister of Education as one of the spheres of State activity where substantial economies could properly be effected, has yet to appear, the public will have learned with gratification that very substantial savings have been found possible. For some years the Parliamentary vote has approximated a million, which, for a small State, many have thought excessive. Last year it was swollen by an additional £50,000, and was kept from rising higher only by reductions in personnel and salaries, and the refusal of many applications from country districts for new schools. It is fair to our public school system to remember that it by no means absorbs the whole of the million or more, since this sum includes grants to the University, the Public Library, Institutes, and other "educational institutions," which, if omitted from the calculation, would leave the school system answerable for something between £800,000 and £900,000.

But even this sum is considerably in excess of what the State, willing though it might be, can afford to pay, and it is well known that the Government, in seeking openings for economy, has had its eye on the Education Department, which has received a good deal of attention from the public also. Earlier in the year Dr. Killian, Bishop of Port Augusta, among others, complained of the number of quite well-to-do people whose children were provided with free secondary education, thereby "freeing hundreds of pounds for expenditure on frivolities and amusements." Were the secondary schools of the State maintained, like the similar schools under private control, at the cost of those who benefit from them, no hardship would be inflicted on promising youths whose parents were unable to pay the fees, since there are bursaries to provide for all such cases. Even without the bursaries, provision is made by the Workers' Educational Association to meet the requirements of those whose thirst for the waters of the Pierian Spring is not quenched by the schools. Responsible citizens have hazarded doubts whether the State would not have done better to content itself with ensuring that the educational foundations were "well and truly laid," without troubling overmuch about the superstructure. Even Professor Kerr Grant, who, after forty years spent in the service of education, is not likely to minimise its advantages, has had to ask the public whether the gain to the average pupil compensates the taxpayer from his expenditure on secondary schools. The right kind of pupil, he shows, will go a long way towards making his opportunities, as, for example, did Faraday, who had no free education to help him, but had, from first to last, only his own resources to depend on.

Prescott is the leader, is a section of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, and, since its inauguration seven years ago in the stables of the property at Urrbrae, has done much to remove a factor which had helped bad seasons and adverse economic conditions in bringing failure to many Australian farmers—the lack of knowledge of the chemical constituents of the soil. It has grown so that it is now necessary to use almost the whole of one floor of the Darling and Melrose laboratories, opened about 18 months ago.

Professor Prescott, in outlining the work of the division, said that the results achieved since work was started in 1927 showed the necessity for careful surveys. The need was more obvious where irrigation was proposed. Each survey involved the preparation of a detailed soil map, and the recording of the chemical and physical characters of the soil types. "We are told about the vast open spaces of Australia," he said, "but it is no good placing men on the land until it is known what is the nature of the country they are going to open up."

Working for Australia

There is a touch of romance in the story of the growth of the division. Professor Prescott took charge in the coach house in 1925, and spent the next three years in training men for work which is now Commonwealth wide in its application. All work is done in co-operation with the respective State departments of Forestry, Agriculture and Irrigation, to prevent the possibility of overlapping between Federal and State services.

The soil survey organisation is in charge of Mr. J. K. Taylor, and since the initial work in 1927, the following surveys have been made in detail:—Renmark Irrigation area (including Block E and Chaffey), the reclaimed swamps between Mannum and Wellington, the bed of Lake Albert, the Woorinen settlement at Swan Hill, Victoria, portion of the hundred of Kuitpo, the Cadell Irrigation settlement, and King Island in Bass Strait. Through an outpost at Griffith, 80,000 acres of rice land in the Murrumbidgee irrigation area have been surveyed. In addition to the detailed work, the division has taken an interest in the classification of Australian soils, and vegetation types. A vegetation map of Australia has been prepared by Professor Prescott, as well as a map showing the principal soil zones.

Valuable Finds

Some of the more valuable finds in the laboratory section include a discovery by Mr. R. J. Best of a new method of estimating the quantity of salt in the soil, which enables salt surveys to be carried out more expeditiously and accurately. Other sections of the work cover investigations into soil fertilising problems, and the analysis of pasture, the last named being made in conjunction with Professor Richardson.

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Professor W. K. Hancock, who fills the chair of modern history at the Adelaide University, was born at Brighton, Victoria, 33 years ago today. Professor Hancock was educated at the Melbourne Church of England Grammar School, and later at the Melbourne University, where he attained great distinction, taking first-class honors in classics in his first year, and first-class honors in history in the second year's course. He secured a final exhibition in history and political economy. He was chosen in 1920 as a Commonwealth Rhodes scholar. He gained the Oxford "blue ribbon" of the university, and a fellowship of All Souls' College, which had never before been secured by an Australian. He continued his work at Oxford until the end of 1925, and came to Adelaide early in the following year to take up his duties at the University. At the age of nine he won the Royal Humane Society's medal for rescuing a child from drowning in the Mitchell River, Victoria. While at the Melbourne University he was editor of the University magazine, and gained the gold medal for oratory.

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CONSERVATORIUM PIANO RECITALS

Designed to assist teachers and students interested in the work of the University of Adelaide music examinations, the second of a series of three recitals of pianoforte test pieces was given yesterday afternoon and evening in the Elder Conservatorium Hall by Mr. George Pearce. He played the works set for candidates in Grades III, and IV. The final recital will be given on July 2, when Mr. William Silver will render the first and second grade test pieces, together with request numbers by Brahms, Beethoven, and others.

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NECESSARY PRELUDE TO SETTLEMENT

Soil Examination

URRBRAE'S WORK

Professor J. A. Prescott, of the division of soil research at the Waite Agricultural Institute, would not place men on the land, under any big scheme of closer settlement, until accurate surveys of the soil had been made, and the prospective farmers could be assured against fighting a losing battle from the start because of the unsuitability of the soil.

The division of which Professor

Committee's Report Presented

ECONOMY DRIVE

It is understood that the report of the education committee, which reached the State advisory finance committee at the week-end, has recommended substantial cuts in expenditure.

One amount mentioned yesterday was in the vicinity of £250,000. A drastic reorganisation of education services in certain directions is likely to follow.

The Government will have the report before it shortly in connection with the preparation of estimates under the Premier's plan, which provides for a further reduction in general expenditure by £400,000. The advisory finance committee has been giving close attention to details of economies, and the forthcoming Budget Speech will announce some outstanding changes. Apart from direct cuts, and the elimination or restriction of existing services, additional savings are expected from co-ordination of departments. Other important reports affecting expenditure are to come from the railways commission, and the agricultural and soldier settlement special committees of enquiry.

Education Cuts

The members of the education committee are Professor J. McKellar Stewart, Mr. J. Wallace Sandford, and Mr. W. J. Adey (Director of Education). Their report covers the whole field of education activities, and an authority remarked yesterday: "The question at the moment is not what South Australia would like, but what we can afford." On the 1930 figures, a cut in the vote of £250,000, would bring the annual expenditure down to about £800,000. For many years the slogan was, "A million for education," but in 1930 that was exceeded by £50,725 and the cost a head of the mean population reached £1 13/7, practically the same as 1929. Economies made last year amounted to £131,686, but the overhauling which the committee has made has led to far-reaching recommendations.

Concessions to Go

One is believed to be a higher average attendance for the establishment of a class VII school. At present this may be granted if not fewer than six on the average is guaranteed, but the average may be raised to 10. Salaries of certain classes of teachers—those of single girls, possibly, for one—are understood to be discussed in the report as another opportunity for reasonable economy, and the cost of the teachers' training college is also said to be a subject of comment. Many concessions, like free transport now associated with education facilities are likely to go, and the extension of the teaching by correspondence system may be found to offer peculiar advantages in the economy drive, which will hit small outback schools. The cost and relative functions of the high schools and technical branches form a further enquiry, and important changes here are said to be indicated.

More Railways Economies

The Railways Royal Commission will complete its long investigation at the end of this month, and its final report will follow. Although substantial economies have been made already in for many years the Railways Department by reduced Colonial Surgeons' services, retrenchment and wages and in this State. Professor Cleland's report will recommend steps by which an old Prince Alfred College boy, her reduced.

Mr. Butler Wants Details of Economies

The leader of the Opposition (Mr. Butler) said yesterday that he hoped before the Premier moved the second reading of the Premier's Plan Bill he would present details of the economies the Government intended to make. Parliament was entitled to know that at least before a vote on the plan was taken. The Federal Government had done that some time ago, and had set State Ministries an excellent example. He suggested that Mr. Hill should follow that course and so take members completely into his confidence. Both Houses will meet this afternoon.

Bursts Near Berri and Loxton

EARTH TREMOR FELT

Shortly before midnight on Saturday a meteorite burst in the sky and appeared to fall near Berri and Loxton. It threw out shafts of brilliant bluish green and red light, and was followed by a noise like a sharp clap of thunder.

The houses in both townships were shaken by an earth tremor severe enough to make the windows rattle for nearly a minute.

The bursting of the fire-ball was preceded by a vivid pale blue light, which was seen in townships more than 100 miles from either Berri or Loxton. In Adelaide, and at Balaklava and Karoonda, the sky looked like a huge blue-lighted sheet.

Those who saw the phenomenon at Loxton say that it came from the south-west, and when it burst it sent out rays of light which made it easy to distinguish houses and trees, and seemed to flash over the whole of the sky. There was a lapse of about two minutes before the rumbling noise and the earth tremor.

Professor Kerr Grant last night explained this interval between the time of the flash and the noise by stating that the noise was only heard when the meteorite entered the lower air. It might have burst many miles from the earth.

Houses Shaken

The houses appear to have been shaken more severely at Loxton, where several residents, particularly those living on the River Murray bank, were much alarmed, until they reassured themselves by putting the window rattling down to the effects of the wind. Most were in bed at the time, but there were few who were not awakened. The tremor was felt also at Meribah.

At Renmark only a slight earth tremor was felt, but the flash was very bright.

It was at Karoonda that a party of University students found the last meteorite which fell in this State. Professor Kerr Grant said there was nothing peculiar in the fact that two had fallen in the same district. It was just a coincidence. There was no doubt that Saturday night's phenomenon had been a meteorite which, apparently, had burst. Unless some precise information could be secured it would not be worth while looking for it, as it was unlikely that any large pieces would be found.

The Government Astronomer (Mr. Dodwell) had no doubt about the character of the phenomenon. The earth tremor, he said, would be felt only within a radius of about 50 miles of where the meteorite fell. Outside of that, the light would be seen, but no noises would be heard.

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Professor J. B. Cleland is 53 today. He is a native of Adelaide, and has occupied the Chair of Pathology at the Adelaide University since 1920. His father, the late Dr. W. L. Cleland, was Colonial Surgeon-General, and in this State. Professor Cleland's report will recommend steps by which an old Prince Alfred College boy, her reduced.



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the Department of Public Health in Sydney. During his stay in Western Australia, Professor Cleland became president of the Natural History Society, the forerunner of the Royal Society in that State, and he was also a member of the Linnean Society of New South Wales. He has been president of the Royal Society in New South Wales and in this State. He has spent much time on cancer research, is a much travelled man, and has written many papers on medical subjects. A distinguished savant, his recreations are ornithology and botany.