

News 22-6-31

FUTURE EDUCATION PLANS

Will Enquiry Committee Recommend Cut in Vote?

Taxpayers who have been clamoring for a cut in the education grant are eagerly awaiting publication of the report of the committee appointed to report on economies that may be effected.

Members of the committee are Prof. J. McKellar Stewart, Mr. J. Wallace Sandford, and Mr. W. J. Adey (Director of Education). Should the firstnamed two recommend to the Advisory Committee on State Finance drastic cuts in the education system it is doubtful if Mr. Adey will support them. In such an event he may submit a minority report, and thus the Advisory Committee will have before it recommendations which have not been unanimously approved.



MR. ADEY

THIS situation was foreseen when the names of members of the committee were first announced. Correspondents in "The News" pointed out the weakness.

"The enquiry into the main scheme of State education will rest primarily with Mr. Adey, the man who administers it," wrote one. "Prof. Stewart will, of course, watch the interests of the University and advanced education, and Mr. Sandford will represent taxpayers."

This view was strongly supported by other writers.

"How can Mr. Adey pass critical judgment on his own administration?" asked "General Opinion." "Take, for example, the question of high schools. Teachers themselves have advocated for years that entrance to these institutions is far too easy, and that they are overloaded with students of poor mental equipment or attainment."

"How can the Director be expected adversely to criticize this system which, as Superintendent of Secondary Education, he was responsible for developing?"

"As a man of honor he would have abandoned the scheme long ago if he had not been convinced that his policy was right according to his own judgment. That judgment, however, should be examined by independent review?"

No one questions the ability of Mr. Adey to work economically the department under his control, but points raised are:—

Is South Australia justified in spending more than £1,000,000 a year on education?

Has the high school system, the net expenditure on which was £104,288 in 1930, reached

a stage when it should be closely examined and perhaps curtailed?

Is the expense of travelling "specialists" justified?

Should there be an amalgamation of technical and high school departments as correlative branches of secondary education?

Should the smallest outback schools be attached to the Correspondence School?

Many educationists support Mr. Stephen Parsons, who advocates a substantial cut in the education vote. In his opinion the State should not carry the education of its children beyond the primary school.

Others contend that if the high schools are to be retained a more rigid test should be applied, and that the number of marks required before a candidate may qualify should be raised.

Another suggestion is that with a view to enabling the brightest scholars to continue their studies a system of bursaries be introduced. It is pointed out that these at £10 each would nearly halve the expense of secondary education, which in 1930 cost for each child in average attendance £19 11/9, according to the last report of the Education Department. The cost of primary education, exclusive of amounts expended on buildings, was £9 19/3 a child in average attendance.

The cost of secondary education rose from £2 17/6 in 1907 to £22 8/9 in 1926, and gradually decreased to £19 11/9 in 1930. From 1907 to 1930 the cost of primary education rose from £3 18/10 to £9 19/3.

The Advertiser

and Register.

ADELAIDE: FRIDAY, JUNE 26, 1931

SCIENCE AND PROGRESS

Professor Kerr Grant's remarkable deliverance before the Charge Engineers' Association early in the week, has attracted deserved attention. It was an all-round indictment of religious, educational, and political institutions, which he held together responsible for the plight in which the world finds itself. It was based largely on the failure of all three to keep pace with the growth and expansion of science. Like many others, the professor is dissatisfied with the present Parliamentary system of government. The ordinary elector is not a person who takes much account of education or intellectual ability in the candidates who come before him, and the consequence is that the management of public affairs has "passed into the hands of men who are most evidently incompetent to manage them." Further, it is contended, schools today are hundreds of years behind the times, through failing to take account of the discoveries and tendencies of science. Religion, again, has drifted into a backwater where it is scarcely touched by the strong, swift current of modern thought. And so we have a call to pull ourselves together, and give science the chance too long denied it.

There is, of course, another side to all this, on which Professor Grant's critics have not touched. He himself speaks of a "temporary dislocation" of the civilised world, occasioned by science, as a possible cause of the present stress, and quotes a suggestion—which he does not endorse—that mankind would be better were science and industry given a ten years' holiday, in order that other spheres of activity might have time to catch up to them. There are other evidences of a mis-giving in some quarters as to the beneficent effects of science on modern life. There is a haunting fear that civilisation has been given by science a power which, unless care be exercised, it may use to destroy itself. In the past, we have been accustomed to regard science as a power making for righteousness, and the strengthening of society against the follies and crimes of individuals. But now the thinking section of mankind, with recollections of the last war, are accustoming themselves to think of the next as one that may involve the destruction of populations, through the weapons which warfare owes to science. Then we have had also speculations, almost as dreadful, concerning the mastery which machinery is obtaining over mankind; threatening almost to realise Butler's nightmare of machinery brought to such perfection as to have acquired the power of reproduction, and, what was still more ominous, a will of its own. To all this, Professor Kerr Grant replies quite fairly that the fault does not lie with science, but with education and politics, which are so backward that man cannot be trusted with the weapons forged for his hands. It is because the forces of evil persist through all human effort, perverting it, or threatening to pervert it at every turn, that the churches and schools are called upon to redouble their exertions to capture and retain the allegiance of the human mind. While they must adapt their teachings to new truths, it is, as Dr. G. H. Wright, chairman of the Australasian Congregational Union, points out, not for religion to follow modern thought in all its turnings and twistings, but rather to keep and strengthen its hold on the moral nature of man.

News 23-6-31

EDUCATION CUT

Release of Report Disturbs Premier

"NOT SEEN IT"

"I have not even seen the report. The fact that portion of its contents appeared in a section of the press today, mentioning a cut of £250,000, is surprising to me," said the Hon. L. L. Hill (Minister of Education) when asked this morning if he had received the report of the Education Committee. "The whole thing savors of a breach of confidence by someone."

No report has been furnished to me as Minister of Education, or to other members of the Government.

"Will a cut be made in the education vote?" Mr. Hill was asked.

"Cuts have already been made in regard to education, but I cannot say until I have seen the report of the committee what will be done in the future," he replied.

Mr. Hill will confer with Mr. W. J. Adey (Director of Education) this afternoon.

News 26-6-31

DEGREES CONFERRED

Ceremony at University

Nine degrees were conferred at the University of Adelaide this afternoon by Sir George Murray (chancellor). They were:—Degree of bachelor of laws, Sir J. Brooks de Boehme and Mervyn Clemm; degree of doctor of medicine, Aubrey Julian Lewis; degrees of bachelor of medicine and bachelor of surgery, William Lister Reid; degree of doctor of science, Henry Herman Leopold Adolph Bross; degree of bachelor of science, Peter Tennent Cooke; degree of bachelor of engineering and diploma in applied science, Walter Ross; and degrees of doctor of letters, Kenneth Campbell, and Kenneth...

Adv. 24-6-31

NATIONALISM IN AUSTRALIA

"Tendency Towards Exclusiveness"

"National organisation enriches community life, but it also narrows it through its tendency to exclusiveness," said Professor W. A. Hancock, in a lecture at the University last night, on the "Australasian Commonwealth and the British Commonwealth," in which he traced the development in the conceptions of "Sovereignty" and "Commonwealth" from the 16th century to the present time.

Professor Hancock pointed out that during the 19th century there were two forces at work—nationalism and international association. The first eventually proved the stronger, and was responsible to a great degree for the war. Those two forces were reconciled in the British Commonwealth, in which the underlying idea was association in liberty for the common good. Australia, as a member of the British Commonwealth of free nations, was no longer a dependent colony, but a self-governing community. She had become an "international person," being a signatory to the Peace Treaty and an original State of the League of Nations. That national independence brought in its train a national responsibility which could not be evaded. There was a tendency in Australia to want to have things both ways, and to make requests to Britain which would be quite legitimate if she were a dependent colony, but which were hardly in keeping with her claim to be an independent nation. There was also a danger of Australia's developing an exclusive nationalism, and of her forgetting that the action of one member of a Commonwealth often reacted upon the others.