

# Labor Men Oppose Fees

## "STATE WOULD SUFFER"

Free education for all, even up to the University standard, is advocated by members of the Labor Party, who are opposed to the suggestion that parents should contribute toward the cost of their children's education at schools above the primary standard.

The question has been raised by the report that the committee which made investigations into what economies might be introduced in the Education Department may recommend such a course.

Members of the Labor Party pointed out that brilliant children would be debarred from getting the best out of life, and one union official suggested that free education for the people even up to and through the University should be provided.

### EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

Mr. E. R. Dawes, M.P. (president of the United Trades and Labor Council) said that payment for higher education was opposed to the principles of Labor. "Such a system will have the effect of bringing about less education for persons with the least means, and is not desirable," he declared.

"I think the existing system is the right one," said Mr. F. F. Ward (secretary of the State branch of the Australian Labor Party). "The people are entitled to the highest education, and the cost should be met out of general revenue. If payment is demanded for higher education many brilliant children will be debarred from getting the best out of life, and the community and State will suffer."

"My union believes that free education for the people, even up to and through the University, should be provided," said Mr. P. A. Elliott (organising secretary of the South Australian branch of the Amalgamated Engineering Union).

"We stand for equal opportunity for all, and believe that it is the duty of the State to provide education facilities."

### PAYMENT FAVORED

Alfred G. McEwin, a keen educationist, said this morning that he had always been opposed to the provision of secondary public schools. He favored the system which was in operation years ago, when scholarships and bursaries were offered to enable children to attend the colleges for higher education. Many successful professional men in South Australia, he said, had gained their education through that course.

Mr. McEwin expressed the view that under the present system only a small proportion of the students make use of the higher education in later life, but thought that as the secondary schools had been built, and the staffs trained, it would be a difficult matter to return to the old system. He favored the payment by students of a small weekly fee.

Mr. E. H. Bakewell (president of the Central Council of Employers of Australia) is of the opinion that the State cannot afford to give so much in the way of education for nothing. "It would be reasonable, he said, to expect those receiving the advantages of a higher education to make a small contribution toward the cost."

Adv. 30-6-31

Sir Thomas Hudson Beare, one of South Australia's most distinguished sons, is 72 today. He is the youngest son of the late Mr. T. H. Beare, a well-known pioneer, and was educated at Prince Alfred College and the Adelaide University.



Sir Hudson Beare

Gaining the South Australian scholarship in 1880, he went to University College, London. He was appointed Professor of Engineering in Heriot-Watt College in 1887, and was a professor at University College, London, from 1889 to 1901. He has been Regius Professor of Engineering at Edinburgh University since 1901, and Dean of the Faculty of Science since 1914. He is greatly interested in entomological research, and is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh. Several valuable works on engineering have been published by him. Professor Hudson Beare's father came to the State by the Duke of York, the first vessel to land passengers in South Australia. The landing was made at Kingscote, Kangaroo Island.

## SECONDARY EDUCATION

### Contention That Results Justify Costs

(By C. M. WARD, M.A., Vice-Principal of Adelaide High School)

Arguments advanced and statements made in the article on "Future Education Plans" in "The News" on Monday express views on education to which much prominence has been given lately. On this ground I desire to criticise it.

It is pleasing that the article quotes correctly the figure for the cost of high schools—£104,000 a year—in contrast with statements involving "half a million," "hundreds of thousands," which have been made.

Mr. Stephen Parsons and "General Opinion" cannot be accepted as authorities on educational subjects, because they are not in a position to know the facts.

ALTHOUGH £104,000 is a large sum (from the point of view of the householder or shopkeeper), on what grounds can the contention be based that it is excessive for the cost of high schools in the State? Surely the only fair way to consider the cost is to compare it with other public expenditure in this and other States or countries.

New South Wales and Victoria, although more closely settled than South Australia, spend proportionately to population as much on higher education in general and high schools in particular. Critics have held up Victoria as an example, because a fee is charged there for high school education. The fee mentioned is £6 a student. Figures in the Victorian Minister's report for 1929, however, show that of the expenditure on high schools only about one-tenth is recovered by fees.

It is shown that the average fee is £2 a pupil, and that in spite of this and of the greater facilities for maintaining a system of schools in a closely settled country, Victoria spends approximately as much a student in the high schools as South Australia. Western Australia, which is comparable to South Australia in that it is sparsely populated, spends much more.

Adelaide University receives a Government grant of £61,000, as well as being richly endowed, and the university student pays only about one-third of the cost of his training. Adelaide School of Mines receives a grant of £23,000. If these sums are spent by the Government on single institutions—I do not question the soundness of the policy—it is absurd to contend that £104,000 is too much to expend on the maintenance of all the high schools in the metropolis and country. Any temporary financial advantage that could be gained by wrecking the high school system would necessarily be small, and the retribution would be great.

The article states that a system of bursaries would be only half as expensive. It would be, of course, if the expenses were restricted to half, but how would it be possible on the figures quoted (£19 a student) to supply the "brightest" children with a secondary education for the £10 a year suggested? This is possible at present because the £10 is a sustenance allowance in addition to free education. Apart from this, the "brightest" children are not the only ones who should be given their chance.

### "Hysteria in Financial Circles"

Another suggestion made is to amalgamate the technical high schools and the high schools. What good purpose would be served by this it is difficult to see. It is not suggested which side is to do the absorbing. I wonder if it is thought that the one wholly technical high school at Thebarton is less costly, and that it would therefore be a good thing to make it absorb the high school system. If so, I refer to the figures of the Minister's report for 1930, wherein it is shown that the technical high school costs £5 more a child in average attendance than the high schools.

Figures which have been published before were given purporting to show the alarming increase in expenditure on secondary education since 1907. Of course, there has been an increase from £2 a student. In fact, the expenditure grew from nothing originally—there were no high schools in 1907!

All this easy talk of curtailing the education vote is surely the outcome of hysteria in financial circles. One can pass lightly over the hardships caused by such a policy to teachers, who, by the way, are as good taxpayers as many of their noisy critics. Any policy, however, which impairs the efficiency of our system in any of its branches (particularly the high schools, which for some queer reason have been singled out for attack) must result in a lowering of the mental and moral outlook of the community.

Politicians and Directors of Education are fully alive to the necessity of administering their departments as economically as possible. At the same time the business of maintaining a proper balance between the various sections of their departments should surely be left to their judgment rather than to that of "Public Opinion," Mr. Stephen Parsons, and Prof. Kerr Grant.

These critics are entitled to their own convictions. Prof. Kerr Grant, who is a specialist in science, may express the most radical views

on religion, politics, and education, but anything like a general acceptance of his views as authoritative would probably lead to such disruption and confusion as would stagger even him.

It is all very well for the professor and his fellow-scientists to gallop 10 years ahead, as he claims, by brilliant thinking and decisive action, and roundly to condemn all other people because they do not drop everything and run after them. Science, so far as it behaves scientifically, has its role to fill, and its claims as a good servant have been and are being duly recognised. Real progress, however, must necessarily have regard for tradition and loyalty to constituted authority.

To uproot ourselves from the past and hurl ourselves 10 years into the future, with a contemptuous gesture for the traditions that have nurtured us, would not be progress but suicide. This appears to be one of the suggestions of Prof. Kerr Grant for righting the world, which he has discovered "is out of joint," and it must be admitted that he is facing his self-appointed task of setting it right with more gusto than the Prince of Denmark.

His alternative—that science should go to sleep for 10 years—would probably meet with more general approval. Perhaps we could prevail upon "Taxpayer," "General Opinion," and the rest of the army to join him in his 10 years' holiday.

There are many in the community who are only too ready to absorb the doctrines of these critics, but it is consoling to know that there is a large majority which does not think it smart to belittle our method of government and which clings loyally to the ideals of religion and education—ideals not circumscribed by science and finance, but ever reaching out and striving, with due humility, for a clearer understanding of the eternal realities, against which the forces of barbarism and rationalism have throughout the ages dashed themselves in vain.

### ROYAL COLLEGE OF SURGEONS

First Examination in Australia (Published in "The Times")

LONDON, June 26. Prof. William Wright (professor of anatomy at the London Hospital Medical College) and G. A. Buckmaster (professor of psychology of Bristol University) are travelling to Australia on the Maloja to conduct the first examination in the Commonwealth for the fellowship of the Royal College of Surgeons. There will be 24 candidates and the examination will be held in Melbourne on August 11. The professors will return to England by way of New Zealand and Canada. Prof. Wright today gave a farewell lunch party at which Dr. Frank McCallum represented Sir Granville Ryrie (Australian High Commissioner).

### Cost of Scholarships

WITH the subject of the education vote under review it is interesting to note that last year 308 scholarships cost the Government £8,106. This sum was made up as follows:—57 intermediate scholarships, £1,385, or more than £24 each, and 193 qualifying, £3,405 11/, or approximately £17 10/ each. These were tenable at Government high schools or other approved private secondary colleges or schools. Fifty bursaries, tenable at Adelaide University, cost £1,831 15/2 in fees, and £1,210 in allowances, or a total of £3,041 15/2. The amount spent on six scholarships at Roseworthy Agricultural College was £94 10/, and evening studentships cost £180. There were 6,038 boys and girls enrolled at high schools at a cost a child in average attendance of £19 11/9, or £17 5/3¼ for each child instructed.