

# CLOSING OF 154 COUNTRY SCHOOLS RECOMMENDED

## Fees For High School Tuition

### EDUCATION COMMITTEE'S REPORT

The reports of the Education Committee, which were laid on the table of both Houses of Parliament by the Premier (Mr. Hill) yesterday, state that so much has been taken from revenue derived from direct taxation that the continuance of the present policy will militate against the well-being of the whole community; therefore, the need for making considerable reductions is imperative.

It is recommended that the 154 Class 7 schools (with an average attendance of less than 10) should be closed at an early date. Later, the committee thinks it may even be necessary to close schools with an average attendance of less than 12 and even 15. That would involve 365 schools. It also recommends the amalgamation of high schools, leaving one to serve a large district, and the charging of fees amounting to £9 9/ a year for tuition at high schools, and £4 14/6 a year for tuition at central and higher primary schools to pupils over 14.

In a minority report, the Director of Education (Mr. Adey), who says, "It is with reluctance and some misgiving for the future of super-primary education that I support the suggestion for fees," gives his reasons for opposing some of the recommendations of the committee.

The committee is of opinion that the State should limit expenditure on education by making the department an annual grant representing a definite proportion of the net income of the State. The committee is of opinion that, in the event of the Government deciding on such a policy, it should be provided that the dispersal of the grant shall be guided throughout by the recommendations contained in its report.

Discussing the aims of education, the committee points out that the number of children having the capacity to profit adequately by secondary and university training is relatively small, and a carefully devised method by which pupils will be selected, according to their capacity, for entrance upon one or other of the different courses provided in the super-primary schools, is essential.

The committee, which was appointed at the end of last year, comprised Mr. J. Wallace Sandford (chairman), Professor J. McKellar Stewart, and Mr. W. J. Adey (Director of Education). It is pointed out in the report that of the total revenue from direct taxation for the year ended June 30, 1930, £2,857,618, the expenditure of the Education Department was £998,950, or 34.9 per cent.

#### Growth in Teaching Staff

Referring to economies which had been made by the department, on the recommendation of the Director, the committee states that, unfortunately, all so far, had been much more than offset by very heavy increases in charges. The growth in the number of teachers had been out of proportion to the number of children instructed, and it would appear that that fact, when considered with the substantial increases in rates of salaries paid, was responsible largely for the heavy increase in the expenditure of the department.

#### Closing Small Schools

The committee recommends that all class 7 schools, numbering 154, with an average attendance of less than 10, be closed by an early date, to be fixed by the finance committee.

"The effect of this should be watched carefully," the report proceeds, "for the committee is of opinion that, probably, it may later be necessary, on grounds of economy, to close the class 7 schools at which the average attendance is less than 12. If this action be taken, it will affect 94 additional schools, while, if it is decided to make 15 the minimum attendance, it will involve in all 365 schools."

#### Itinerant Teachers

The committee further recommends that the department should consider supplementing correspondence tuition by the appointment of one or more itinerant teachers of high quality, and securing, where possible, the voluntary services of suitable persons, preferably those who have a university training, also that the teachers of schools closed as a result of the committee's recommendation be absorbed, as far as possible, in other existing schools.

If this recommendation is put into effect the children at present in schools which would be closed would have to be provided for, either by transport facilities, subsidised schools, or correspondence tuition. The average cost of any one of these facilities was approximately £7 a year for each pupil. The cost of the various small attendance schools was—Less than 10 pupils, £38 (1,290 pupils); between 10 and £7,077 (1,011 pupils); from 12 to £10,920 (1,560 pupils).

#### Travelling Allowances

The committee recommends that the present distance of three miles, for which travelling allowances are granted, be increased to five miles for all pupils attending primary schools, and for those up to the age of 14 attending any other than primary. It is further suggested that no travelling allow-

ance be paid to pupils who have attained the age of 14, unless by special approval, and that the present allowance of 6d. a day for children travelling six miles or more be reduced to 4d. If this recommendation is put into effect a saving of £9,000 would be made.

#### High and Central Schools

The report states that of the 29 high schools in the State only 10 have an average daily attendance of 100 or more, and the committee recommends the amalgamation of the smaller schools, on the grounds that the needs of the community would be sufficiently met by one high school in each large district. For instance, a school at Mount Gambier would provide for the needs of the South-East, while Port Pirie and Peterborough would serve the Mid-North and centre.

The committee considers that, as high school education is beyond the qualifying certificate standard, those who enjoy its benefits should make a direct contribution to its cost. It, therefore, recommends that a fee of £3 3/ a term or £9 9/ a year (approximately half the cost) be charged to pupils who have attained the non-compulsory age. The reasons advanced in support of a charge being made for high school education holds with equal weight with regard to training in central schools, it is argued.

Dealing with the higher primary schools, the committee recommends charging a fee of £1 11/6 a term to those pupils who have attained the non-compulsory age, and that, if more than one paying child of the same parents be in attendance at the same time, a reduction in fees of 15 per cent. for the second child, and a further reduction of 10 per cent. for the third and each subsequent child, be made.

Similar reduction in these would also apply to high and central schools and the Thebarton Technical School, the fee for which school would be £4 14/6 a year.

#### Special Aptitude

In order that children of special aptitude and promise should not, for financial reasons, be debarred from attending high schools, the committee has recommended:—

- (a) That free places, equal to 12½ per cent. of the total new enrolments for the year, but not exceeding 300 in number, be made available annually, the holders of these places to be determined by the results of the qualifying certificate examinations.
- (b) In order that pupils already in attendance at high schools, when the system of fees is introduced, may not be denied the benefits of free places, in addition to those awarded to first year pupils, free places be awarded to pupils in the second, third, and subsequent years respectively; the ratio between the number of free places in each year to be the same as the ratio between the number of free places of pupils in that year.
- (c) That pupils who have reached the leaving honors classes when the system of fees is introduced, be exempted from payment of fees.

The Adelaide Technical High School, which, in fact, serves the purpose of a high school, should come under the above provisions.

#### School of Mines

The committee states that the School of Mines and Industries provides for certain courses similar in most respects to those taken by apprentices at the Adelaide Technical College, and suggests that, if the practical work of the students were curtailed and more emphasis laid on the theoretical courses, the problem of accommodation in one building might be solved.

From the practical point of view, it would appear that children who have completed the two years' course in central schools have an advantage over those high school children who, having either completed the second year course or were proceeding to the third year course, have failed to qualify for the intermediate examination. If the re-

commendation regarding fees is carried out it seems that one immediate effect will be a considerable falling off in the number of high school pupils. The committee, therefore, recommends that means be devised for more rigorously selecting, according to their capacity, the pupils permitted to enter high schools.

The committee recommends that the facilities for the Central School type of education be extended; that specific commerce subjects be omitted from the course of studies at high schools, and be retained in the central school courses; and that the department be asked to keep the names of all pupils in every type of school on record for say, two years after leaving, in order to see their occupations.

#### Other Recommendations

**PRIMARY SCHOOLS.**—The committee recommends that domestic arts and woodwork no longer be included in the syllabus.

**PUBLIC LIBRARY, MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY.**—The committee draws attention to the fact that the amount received each year as a Government grant is almost entirely absorbed in the payment of salaries. The cost of administration should be considerably reduced.

**SCHOOL OF MINES AND INDUSTRIES.**—Certain fees charged to students attending the associate courses are relatively low, in comparison with fees charged for similar courses at the University.

**UNIVERSITY.**—The Vice-Chancellor (Sir William Mitchell) will furnish a statement, which the committee will forward to the finance committee at an early date.

**TEACHERS' COLLEGE.**—That the maintenance grants of £60 a year to a man and £50 to a woman be reduced to all students joining in future. Eventually a system should be established abolishing living allowances, all students paying for tuition. It is anticipated that the students now in training will suffice to fill all vacancies occurring to the end of 1932. As the number of students will be considerably diminishing in that year, and if no increase is likely for several years, a reduction be made in the lecturing staff. The offices of supervisor of music and teacher of voice culture should be amalgamated.

The committee is of opinion that substantial savings might be made by increasing the rentals paid by teachers for school residences, and that this matter should be closely examined in October when salaries are revised.

#### Bonuses to Teachers

The report states that in certain instances bonuses or special allowances are made to teachers, and the committee is of opinion that the salary in every case should be definite and cover the responsibilities attached to the position. It, therefore, recommends that, when the revision of salaries is considered in October, the system of bonuses should be abolished. This does not refer to the special living allowances paid to teachers in outlying districts, which it recommends should be reduced by one-sixth.

The committee considers that without impairing educational efficiency, the positions of head mistresses and infant mistress of schools under headmasters could be abolished, and recommends that these mistresses be called assistants-in-charge, with corresponding savings in salaries.

### MINORITY REPORT

#### "No Child Should Be Debarred"

The Director of Education, in his minority report, says the fees recommended in the case of the high schools represent approximately 50 per cent. of the cost. In the higher institutions, such as the School of Mines and the University, the amount of the fees represents approximately one-third of the cost.

Mr. Adey suggests that the fees be, at most, £6 a year for high school students, and £4 for technical and higher primary students.

"I am of the opinion that no child should be debarred, through poverty, from receiving a super-primary education. I, therefore, suggest that the children of parents who, on investigation, are found to be unable to pay the fees should be admitted free of charge."

If, as suggested, the Mount Gambier High School were the only one in the South-East, very few children now attending the Narracoorte, Penola, and Millicent high schools, would be able to enrol at Mount Gambier, because of the additional cost incurred by the child living away from home."

#### State of Small Towns

Mr. Adey points out that the special geographical conditions of South Australia determine that it will always be a State of small towns, which must be provided with educational and other facilities if the rural population is to be maintained.

"If domestic arts and woodwork were omitted from the primary school curriculum, a severe blow would be dealt to the co-relation of school, training and after-school occupation, and the

child would be deprived of that part of his school training which, to him, has been real, educative, and developmental," Mr. Adey states.

The economy made by making headmistresses and infant mistresses assistants-in-charge would not be commensurate with the loss of efficiency. No man could reasonably be expected to have the qualifications necessary for effective supervision and adequate advisory work among the assistants of those large departments. It is pointed out that in the primary service there are 1,665 women.

#### Function of High Schools

Replying to the committee's report about high schools, Mr. Adey states that it is not the function of the high schools merely to train pupils to pass examinations required by certain institutions. Many of the students do not even sit for the examinations, and yet become good citizens, being absorbed into the life of the community.

Mr. Adey agrees with the extension of the course of study in central schools. Preliminary steps had already been taken, but, he says, he views with apprehension any curtailment of the influence of the high school.

## The Advertiser and Register.

ADELAIDE: SATURDAY, JULY 18, 1931

### HOW ENGLISH IS AMERICANISED

There will always be two parties in any department of life—those who welcome change, and those who resist it. The odd thing about the development of language is that the changes usually come from an unthinking section, and are made before anyone is quite aware of it. The easy slang or humorous phrase of today becomes the definite English of tomorrow. A professor of the University of Adelaide has admitted in private—would he dare to publish it in writing?—that the former impossibility, "It is me," has been used so widely that it is now a fair alternative, no longer to be dismissed as wrong. For the professors and grammarians and dictionary-makers are only recorders. They do not make the language; they but set down what they find to be the practice of the best writers and speakers. To invent

Advertiser 18 JUL 1931

Dr. E. Harold Davies, Elder Professor of Music at the Adelaide University, was born at Oswestry, England, on July 18, 1867, and is 64 today. Educated at the local grammar school, he decided to take up music as a profes-



Dr. E. H. Davies

sion, and studied under Dr. Joseph Bridge. Coming to Australia, he continued his musical studies at the University, graduating as a Bachelor of Music in 1896, and taking his doctorate in 1903. It was the first doctorate in music conferred by an Australian university. Dr. Davies enjoys a high reputation as an organist, and has filled the positions of organist and choralmaster at several well-known churches. He is the founder and conductor of the Adelaide Bach Society, and the South Australian Orchestra. His brother, Sir Walford Davies, is one of England's most distinguished musicians, and has published many musical compositions.

Adv. 22-7-31

Cable advice was received by relatives yesterday that Dr. Douglas G. McKay, of Adelaide, has gained the degree F.R.C.S., Edinburgh.