

158 Adv. 9-7-34

TEACHING MUSIC IN SCHOOLS

Scheme Outlined

DR. DAVIES MEETS EDUCATION HEADS

An important step in the teaching of music in schools—and particularly in secondary schools—was taken on Saturday when a meeting, convened by the Director of the Conservatorium (Dr. E. Harold Davies), was held at the Conservatorium. It was attended by the Director of Education (Mr. W. J. Adey), and headmasters of the leading secondary schools, and there was a frank discussion of every aspect of the question.

Dr. Davies, who presided, explained that the conference was called following a motion carried at the last meeting of the Australian Musical Examinations Board, held in Perth. That resolution urged upon the educational authorities the desirability of giving music its due place in their curricula, both primary and secondary. Action in that direction would involve giving expression to the fundamental principle that a modern curriculum should make provision for individual differences in children. The board expressed its regret that although schemes had been evolved to help the music teacher in the elementary schools, the need for similar action in respect of secondary schools appeared to have been completely lost sight of.

Matriculation Subject

It was urged that the State Departments of Education and the non-State secondary schools should take advantage of the scheme of examinations set up by the Australian Musical Examinations Board in order that pupils of secondary schools might be prepared for intermediate and leaving examinations in music; and that steps be taken to provide teachers specially trained to give tuition in music in its various branches of school work, namely, choral training, musical perception and appreciation, singing of staff notation at sight, theory and history of music, organisation of school orchestras, and so on. It was not suggested that the instructor of music on the staff of a school should teach the piano or violin, but it was hoped that every encouragement would be given to those who were receiving instructions from private teachers of music.

Further, it was urged that directors of education and members of the Australian Musical Examinations Board in each State should strongly request their universities to fall into line with many similar institutions in other parts of the Empire and the Western Australian University by permitting music to be taken as a matriculation subject. The board offered its services in implementing these proposals to such authorities as might feel in need of them.

Dr. Davies pointed out at the conference on Saturday that it was generally recognised that Australian schools were far behind those of the mother country in regard to musical training, and that much remained to be done before the same standard was reached in Australia. Modern tendencies in education were strongly in favor of a broader scheme than now existed. True education should aim at the development of faculty and the creation of a sense of values. Education should also be for leisure as well as for work. The need for the recognition of this important fact was greater now than ever before.

Place Of Music

The place of music was akin to that of literature, Dr. Davies said. Speech and song were twin streams—the natural expressions of thought and feeling—from which both literature and music were simultaneously derived.

Music was now a full subject for intermediate and leaving certificates and ranked, for matriculation purposes, equally with all other school subjects. It was also a subject for the arts course at the Adelaide University, the first year of the Mus. Bac. course counting as two units for the B.A. degree.

Important aspects to be considered were whether the child who took music was given adequate time for study and practice; whether he or she was encouraged, and whether it was realised that instrumental technique must be acquired in the formative years between the ages of 10 and 16. To delay the acquirement of technique until after the pupil left school would be definitely to lessen his possibilities as a performer. Further, was it realised that children who were to take music for intermediate or leaving examinations should first undertake examinations in the lower grades as a natural stepping stone to the higher grades? Hitherto, the custom in most of our

Adv. 9-7-34 cont.

schools has been to treat music as an extra, for which additional fees must always be charged," said Dr. Davies. "These extra fees are a severe tax on the parent, who is often hard-pressed to meet the school fees alone. The question is, to what extent can facilities be provided for the furtherance of music in schools without these heavy additional charges? Might a system of all-round levies, as for sport, be practicable?"

"The backward state of school music in Australia contrasts very unfavorably with that of the United Kingdom, where such activities have been highly organised, and now embrace every stage of progress from elementary singing up to the formation of school choirs and orchestras capable of oratorio and opera performances. Throughout the period of school life there is also continuous ear training, sight-reading, and musical appreciation directed by trained music teachers on the staffs of the schools."

Valuable Suggestions

Among suggestions made by Dr. Davies which received consideration were the following:—That songs taught should be of the right kind, calculated to foster good musical taste; and that the teaching of such songs should be constantly linked with ear training, sight-reading, and elementary musical appreciation. He said that the higher teaching of musical appreciation and the wider knowledge of music could be achieved by actual performances and suitable talks by visiting artists who might charge nominal fees; by frequent attendance at good concerts, including special orchestral concerts for children, which might easily be organised if sufficient support were assured; and by gramophone recitals (under competent direction), and possibly broadcast talks.

Dr. Davies said the work outlined dealt mainly with collective instruction as distinguished from individual tuition and was designed directly to foster the love and understanding of music. Such work would require teachers who were specially trained for it. To that end the University, would, if required, establish a specific course dealing with aural work and musical appreciation. The Australian Musical Examinations Board also contemplated establishing a licentiate examination in the same subjects.

"A crucial point for consideration is the provision of sufficient time in the school curriculum for more adequate musical training," added Dr. Davies. "How can the present load of educational subjects be lightened?"

The suggestions made by Dr. Davies were fully discussed, and he was thanked for having called the conference. The Director of Education assured Dr. Davies that he would take the matter into very serious consideration. Others who attended the conference assured him of their support.

It is probable that a further conference will be held later at which concrete proposals are likely to be considered.

Adv. 10-7-34

MORE MUSIC IN SCHOOLS

Support For Dr. Davies

QUESTION OF TIME

Agreement with the view of the Director of the Conservatorium (Dr. E. Harold Davies), that more time should be devoted to the teaching of music in schools, was expressed yesterday by headmasters and headmistresses of secondary schools, but it was stated that difficulty would be experienced in finding the necessary time, owing to the number of subjects which a scholar had to take up in order to pass the intermediate and leaving examinations.

The Director of Education (Mr. W. J. Adey) said he considered that children who possessed musical ability should be allowed to develop their talent. While that was so, difficulty would be experienced in arranging the time-tables in schools to permit of more time being devoted to the teaching of music. Another difficulty would be in finding suitable persons to teach music which would come up to the standard of the intermediate and leaving examinations. Qualified teachers were scarce, and the aim of Dr. Davies could be achieved only gradually. Chorus and choir singing were part of the curriculum in all schools at present. Every effort was made by the Education Department to afford pupils who were taking music lessons from private individuals as

Adv. 10-7-34 contd.

much time off as possible.

"Grateful To Dr. Davies"

The headmaster of St. Peter's College (Rev. Guy Pentreath) said he was grateful to Dr. Davies for having convened the conference, because it gave a hope that music might be given a more prominent part in future in educational circles.

"If boys and girls do not learn to appreciate good music while at school they will certainly not do so afterwards and will be the poorer for the lost opportunity," said Mr. Pentreath. "It is good to listen to the nightingale, but how much more fun it is to be a nightingale oneself."

"I am very much in favor of Dr. Davies's ideas," said the headmaster of Prince Alfred College (Mr. J. F. Ward). "More should be done in teaching music in schools. The main difficulty is to find the people with the requisite knowledge and skill to teach it. The encouragement of good music would be decidedly helpful."

The vice-principal of the Methodist Ladies' College (Miss J. M. Harris) pointed out that as much time as possible was devoted to music at the college, and while she was heartily in accord with the views of Dr. Davies, the difficulty would be to find more time to devote to music. One suggestion made at the conference on Saturday that instead of the ordinary hymn books, tune books should be provided for scholars was a good one, because while the pupils were singing they would also gain a useful knowledge of music.

Girls Demand Many Subjects

Girls were demanding so many other subjects in order to fit them to pass the intermediate and leaving examinations that it would be difficult to find more time for music, said the headmistress of the Girton Girls' School (Miss E. S. Bishop). So much time was now devoted to languages, mathematics, science, geography, and history, among other subjects, that it would be difficult to alter the curriculum to provide more time for music. What could be left out to make more time for music? She considered that so far as the cultural side of music was concerned, girls' schools were living up to the ideal aimed at by Dr. Davies. School choirs had been formed, and lessons in musical appreciation were given by qualified persons.

A Convent of Mercy sister expressed complete accord with the views of Dr. Davies. Particular attention was given to music at Roman Catholic girls' schools, and she did not think that school authorities could be anything but favorable to the opinions expressed by Dr. Davies. "I think his idea is a splendid one, and well worthy of support," she added.

Music A Cultural Subject

"Personally I support Dr. Davies," said the headmaster of Concordia College (Rev. C. F. Graebner). "Music should really be a cultural subject. It is not only an education, but an asset for life after school. I consider Dr. Davies has made a very good move."

The headmaster of King's College (Mr. K. W. A. Smith) also expressed the opinion that Dr. Davies had rendered a service in convening the conference.

"I am in sympathy with the movement," said headmaster of the Adelaide Technical High School (Mr. S. Moyle). "Dr. Davies asked that students who were studying music should be relieved as far as possible of some of their other work. That is very desirable if it can be done, otherwise such students would be at a disadvantage."

"I think all educational authorities are in accord with the objectives of Dr. Davies," the headmaster of Scotch College (Mr. N. M. G. Gratton) said. "There are certain difficulties to be overcome, of course, but I do not think they are insuperable. Everybody is seized with the importance of music. I think the idea of teaching more music in schools is decidedly a good one."

Adv. 10-7-34

Mr. F. E. Williams, Government Anthropologist of Papua, has been awarded the Wellcome Gold Medal, which is open to all nationalities and awarded annually by the Royal Anthropological Institute for the best research essay on the application of anthropological methods to the problems of native peoples. Mr. Williams has, since October, been studying in London and Oxford under a Rockefeller Fellowship, and is expected to revisit Adelaide in September. He is a son of Mr. David Williams, of Unley Park, and a graduate of the University of Adelaide, and was the South Australian Rhodes scholar in 1915.

Adv. 11-7-34

FAMOUS BRIDGES DESCRIBED

Fifth University Public Lecture

Professor R. W. Chapman, in the fifth 1934 public University lecture, given in the Prince of Wales lecture theatre, at the University last night, spoke on "Suspension Bridges." The lecture was illustrated.

"The modern engineer has the advantage of the use of superior appliances and of much stronger and more reliable material," he said. "These, however, will not be sufficient unless he can rely with certainty upon calculations of the stresses upon his structure, rendered possible by the gradual application of scientific methods to the problem of the engineer. Once the engineer shuffled forward with timorous steps in the dark; now he moves onward with vigorous and confident strides in the dawn of the coming day."

Professor Chapman said that the first great modern suspension bridge was built by the famous Telford across the Straits of Menai in 1826. Chains of wrought iron were stretched over towers on each side and anchored into solid rock beyond. The span was 580 ft. That bridge, which was as remarkable in its day as the Sydney bridge in our generation, was still in use. The Brooklyn bridge, completed in 1883 as the result of the vision and courage of Roebling, made another remarkable step. It had a span of 1,595 ft., nearly as great as the Sydney bridge, and had carried the traffic of a great city over the East River for 50 years. Brooklyn bridge was built on the same lines as Menai, but with cables instead of chains. In both the Brooklyn and Menai bridges the towers were fixed with saddles on the top, resting on rollers, over which the cables passed. In the mammoth bridge which had just been completed across the Hudson River, New York, the span was two-thirds of a mile, and more than double the span of the Sydney bridge. The Hudson River bridge was supported by four cables, each three feet in diameter, built up of parallel wires, which if stretched out in one length would reach more than halfway from the earth to the moon. The cables passed over towers at each end, 637 ft. high. Those towers were capable of sufficient deflexion at the top to ease the strains on the cables. The bottom of the roadway was at a height of more than 200 ft. above the water, and the bridge accommodated a yearly traffic of 12 to 15 million vehicles, travelling along a roadway as wide as King William street. That wonderful bridge, however, was by no means the limit of what could be done at present. Under construction across the Golden Gate at San Francisco was a suspension bridge, with the even greater span of 4,200 ft., which was expected to be complete in 1937.

In conclusion, Professor Chapman said that it had been calculated that the physical limit to which such bridges might be built with materials at present available was something like 10,000 ft., but the economic limit beyond which such structures could not pay was probably much less.

Adv. 11-7-34

Teaching Music In Schools

From "Tristis":—The action of the University, on its musical side, in bringing forward the matter of the teaching of music in our schools is much belated. The Conservatorium of Music and other teaching faculties must depend upon the material that lies to hand, and as the musical education as given to the children in the schools is meagre, there is little or no foundation to work upon. To talk about giving musical courses in secondary schools is like putting the roof on a house before the foundations and walls have been truly built. The musical education in our primary schools has been for many years at a very low standard. It consists mostly in learning a few songs by ear. Certainly, the curriculum provides for a very satisfactory standard, but it is mostly honored in the breach. What is the reason? It is because the teachers have had only a superficial musical training. Upon leaving the Teachers' Training College, who certifies the trainees are capable of teaching elementary music? What standard do they attain to? What percentage of them can fulfil the requirements of Curwen's Elementary Certificate, a minimum standard? What percentage of the school inspectors are qualified to examine the music in the schools? What percentage of the boys and girls who obtained the Q.C. last December can sing at sight in the staff notation a simple Psalm tune? If music is to be taught in the secondary schools, the teachers will find the el-

contd. next page