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ABOLITION OF HOMEWORK

Big Education Change In Britain

NO MATRICULATION CERTIFICATES

From "The Advertiser" Special Representative

LONDON, August 7.

A drastic reduction in homework and the abolition of the matriculation examination is forecast as among the revolutionary changes to be made by the Board of Education after a thorough enquiry.

The recommendations include an alteration in the examination system, with a transference of homework to schools under the guidance of teachers, with a limited amount of revision work outside school hours.

The Australian universities have already practically agreed on the abolition of the matriculation certificate, and the southern universities are expected to follow suit.

It has been suggested that new examination subjects should be set according to the probable careers of the boys and girls concerned, thus eliminating the waste of information which may be entirely useless in after life.

In a leading article, the "Daily Herald" wholeheartedly approves of the proposals, expressing the view that the harrying of all children through the scholastic test, from which only a fraction profit, means not only misery all round, but a pitiless waste of human material.

S.A. MOVE TO ALTER MATRICULATION

Mr. Adey's Comment On Present System

S.P.S.C. Head On "Public Examination Cram"

The Director of Education (Mr. Adey) said yesterday that educationists in Australia had been discussing the question of the matriculation certificate for a long time.

"We have not the complaint that some people have," said Mr. Adey, "because the University of Adelaide has always been ready to listen to the plea of the teachers, and to discuss with them the syllabus and requirements of the matriculation.

"It is realised by all teachers that for many students the matriculation requirements do not provide the most suitable education, and we are now moving to have it altered to suit the 90 per cent. of the students who will not go up to the University after leaving school.

"The amount of home work given to children is curtailed according to the grades, and up to Grade 4 no written home work is required. Home work is regulated by instructions, and in the first standard there is no written home work. Even when the temperature rises in March home work is cancelled."

Rev. Guy Pentreath's Views

"I need hardly say how pleased I am to hear of the revolutionary change likely to be made by the Board of Education in London, adding authority as it does to ideas recently expressed by many of those in charge of education in Adelaide," said the headmaster of St. Peter's College (Rev. Guy Pentreath). "Nor am I surprised. The pace of public examination system into which education has largely fallen is becoming intolerable to boys and masters alike. Our minds have enough more brains than one can bear to think about. Schools have little time to train boys and girls for full life and citizenship. All is sacrificed that the Public Examination may be early passed, and the world of business accepts them as completed products of first class material. 'Please, sir, I need not do any more history. I got that last year. If I concentrate on algebra, I think I could make up my subjects.' Poor child, he had satisfied the examiners in the period set by the world. It is to his interest now to drop the subject at which he showed ability. This sort of tragedy and it is nothing less for those who want to see the country long-peopled by a civilised people, and not merely the full inheritance of civilisation, and contributes an increasing share to the world's common treasury of knowledge and achievement—is being enacted time and time again. Australia is awake to the danger, we are other countries. The lead from England, if it be given, will, I believe, find many of the authorities in the Universities and schools out here sympathetic and thankful to follow.

"Homework And The Sheep-Pen"

"The much vexed question of homework cannot be settled from the first problem. So long as schools and boys and girls are judged by their success in crowding through the sheep-pen of the intermediate, homework must go on. While parents run from their labors in the city, their children must continue to toil after their quite equally exacting labors of the day. I would infinitely rather see the young ones set free—not for exhaustive and intensive preparation for a special P, but as a precious gift of time which would make it possible, as now it hardly is, for boys and girls to enjoy the use of their creative and adventurous instincts in music and the arts, craft work, of course, and in play-acting, in the work of all school societies, and in social service, too. The Mind could decorate, again and bless and charm their votaries.

"I should expect that there would be some reduction in scholastic standard of attainments in certain branches of study. I believe that the professors of certain faculties in the Universities would find that newcomers from the schools knew less—say, of chemistry, or mathematics, but I believe, too, that boys would bring much fresher and keener brains to the intensive study of one or two University subjects that they would there study. It is a matter for argument, but of fact that many of the group of scientists who have made Cambridge University a centre of research, left books of science at the University, but the eyes that gazed at those new pages were full of brains and ideas which were keen and fresh. That keen freshness seems to me the vital necessity."

Strain On Examinations

The headmaster of Prince Alfred College (Mr. J. F. Ward) said that there was a strong feeling that the examinations were putting a big strain on everybody, and one result of the strain was that everybody was endeavoring to find some way to minimise the number of subjects to be examined.

Regarding the proposal of the Board of Education to abolish the matriculation, Mr. Ward said that more information was attained than necessary, for it was not likely that the Universities would wipe out the matriculation examination. The decision for some guarantee that the boys and girls concerned had reached a certain standard. There would have to be some substitute for the matriculation, homework could hardly be curtailed until some other method of alter the examination papers, added Mr. Ward.

FREE SPEECH STAND BY N.Z. UNIVERSITY

Support By 600 British Professors And Lecturers

LONDON, August 7.

More than 600 University professors and lecturers throughout Great Britain have sent a letter to the Council of the University of Auckland congratulating the council on its stand in favor of free speech. The Auckland committee of Academic Freedom has been formed in England, and will hold a conference at Oxford on Saturday to discuss the position of University and school teachers.

The "Manchester Guardian," commenting on the letter sent to the Auckland University, writes:—"Those here and elsewhere who imagine that it is the duty of University teachers invariably to be inoffensive and neutral on anything, or face dismissal, can regard this gesture as being very much addressed to them. Universities, and above all Universities, which ought to be the last home of courageous independence, should swell the numbers of the muzzled."

BOARD'S SCHEDULE OF PRINCIPLES

Remarkable Speech Of Lecturer

AUCKLAND, August 8.

The attitude of the Auckland University College Council regarding free speech was given prominence, following the public utterances of Mr. Dickinson, who was temporarily lent by Leeds University as a lecturer on economics.

In a speech before the Auckland Anti-War Council last August, Mr. Dickinson said that he would "rather be shot or hanged by his own Government than be shot on the field of war." He laid the blame for international conflict on capitalism and imperialism, and criticised Great Britain for not making greater efforts to achieve disarmament. "The only good thing that came out of the Great War," he said, "was the Bolshevik revolution."

Mr. Dickinson said people should fight war if it came, and "should fight the battle of Government, which supports war by every means in its power." He added that he was ashamed to have been one of those who served in the Great War.

When a question was asked in Parliament concerning what the Government proposed to do about Mr. Dickinson's "ridiculous speech" the Prime Minister (Mr. Forbes) replied that it was a matter for the University authorities.

Before Mr. Dickinson's speech, the University College Council had adopted a schedule of free speech principles, which was approved by the Professorial Board. Subsequently, the council approved the Professorial Board's suggestion to point out that Mr. Dickinson was only temporarily attached to the college, and that he had not spoken in his capacity as a lecturer.

Mr. Dickinson returned to England last November.

ENGINEERING STUDENTS TO TOUR

Inspections At Newcastle, Broken Hill And Melbourne

A large party of mining and metallurgy students from the Adelaide University and School of Mines will leave Adelaide tomorrow week for Newcastle, where they will attend the first ordinary meeting of the Australian Institute of Mining and Metallurgy from Monday, 19th. Mr. R. A. Laughton (lecturer in metallurgy at the School of Mines) and Mr. D. H. Slee (chemist at the School of Mines) will be in charge of the party, which will comprise Messrs. M. Bertram, C. A. P. Bonney, K. W. Boyce, J. A. Boyce, J. H. Carne, G. Ciracobetich, D. Long-bottom, R. A. Cooper, D. Dey, H. W. Glastonbury, M. Gordon, O. J. Kayser, C. M. Kleeman, R. A. Love, D. Long-bottom, K. P. G. Luscombe, H. Nicholls, K. N. Norman, B. G. Norman, A. B. Ratcliffe, C. Slee, J. C. Smith, J. G. Symons, H. A. Trestrail, R. A. Wiley, J. H. Wilson, and H. Weston. Other members in the party will be Messrs. J. Hebbard (Adelaide) and G. Lillie (Broken Hill Pirie).

From Sydney, the party will be the guests of Broken Hill Proprietary Co., which has numerous mining fixtures and visits at Newcastle. Members of the mining section of this party from Adelaide will return from Newcastle on August 23 for Sydney, where they will join the members from Broken Hill, at which place they will join up with another party of mining students from the Adelaide University and School of Mines. This latter party will leave Adelaide on August 23 for Broken Hill, and will be accompanied by Mr. H. W. Gartrell (lecturer in mining at the University) and Mr. E. W. Hughes (lecturer in metallurgy at the School of Mines.

The metallurgy students, after leaving Newcastle, will go to Melbourne, where they will visit factories of technical interest. Inspections covering four days have been arranged, in the following:—Commonwealth Explosives Factory, Maribyrnong; Commonwealth Leather Factory, Maine Products Limited, the plants of the Imperial Chemical Industries at Deer Park, and the Commonwealth Oil Refineries at Laverton.

The writer of the letter suggested that the use of a textbook, in which certain poems were printed in their original spelling—now archaic—was responsible for "some good results" as well as he did when he gained the qualifying certificate with more than 600 marks.

"The real purpose of teaching English is to enable students to enjoy the beauty in the language and to express themselves clearly in modern English," said the head master of St. Peter's College (Rev. Guy Pentreath).

MATTER OF OBSERVATION

"Without criticising the book complained of in the letter, I have that correct spelling is largely a matter of correct observation. If a boy frequently misspells one word, incorrect, he can hardly be blamed for mis-spelling words.

"On the other hand, when he has reached leaving standard he should be able to distinguish between archaic and modern spelling.

"The head master of Prince Alfred College (Mr. J. F. Ward) agreed with Mr. Pentreath that in English there should be fixed by the time he reaches the leaving.

"Another educational authority said that the parent had apparently confused two things—English literature and English spelling. If the father wants his son to have a business training in spelling and grammar, this would be quite wrong in the study of literature.

But the modern idea was that a knowledge of the language could be gained only by reading the literature that made the language.

MERIT NOT LESSENED

"Original spelling in a textbook does not lessen its merit. I have no objection to the syllabus, although it is doubtful whether examinations in English are necessary. The real purpose of teaching English is to give the boy ideals and to make him think."

The head master of the Adelaide High School (Mr. R. A. Weet) said that he considered the present syllabus for leaving English a well balanced one.

"It was difficult to imagine how an English course could be overloaded with literature. It must necessarily consist largely of the selected literature. The examinations board was always willing to listen to the suggestions of the teachers for improvements in the syllabus.

The acting chairman of the examinations board (Prof. Kerr Grant) said that as he did not know what was in the examiner's mind when he set the syllabus, he could not do did any wish to offer an opinion.

"At the same time," he added, "I think it would be a more rational system of spelling for modern English."

INTERMEDIATE ENGLISH

Sir—The thanks of parents are due to "An Adelaide Father" for ventilating this matter. It is a question that has been simmering for a long time. Instead of being able to devote adequate proportion of their too crowded timetable of college and high school to studying on sound, sensible lines the English language and its literature, our children are fed, I find that our Australian youth, candidates in the intermediate last year, including (mark you, those striving for the commercial certificate, were compelled to wade through the "Public Examinations Board") adding their brains trying to elucidate such appalling rubbish as:—

"(a) Good beauties, let me sustain no scorn; I am very sick and tired of this present sinister usage. (b) Do ye make an alehouse of my lady's house, that ye squeak out your cutpurse of money beneath her window or remorse of voice? (c) If I do not gull him into a newest and make him a common recreation, do not think I have stood in grace to lie straight in my bed. (d) The offence is not so much to be punished as the quality of the time and quarrel might well have given a bloody argument.

Another sample of the strange dope they were required to furnish the poor devil was to answer such riddles as "Malvolio's last words were, 'I'll be revenged on the whole pack of you.' Describe briefly the way in which you imagine he might have set about taking his revenge." (!) This sort of thing causes me to wonder why parents who desire their children—expensively educated for a future career of usefulness—to be able to write, think, and punctuate the English language proficiently, do not revolt against the intermediate and leaving syllabus now inflicted today. What do practical minded employers to say about it, anyhow?

Malvern. DOCEO.

HEAD MASTERS ON SYLLABUS

Archaic Spelling "Harmless"

REPLY TO PARENT

THE Adelaide father who complained in a letter to "The News" that the English syllabus for the leaving examination at present seemed to be overloaded with "literature," and that it should be made of more practical value to boys, received little support from Adelaide educational authorities today.

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