The Education Bill.

Mr. Conveyer should be cordially complimented on the matter and tone of his speech in moving the second reading of the Education Bill in the Assembly. In ably presenting a popular case against the self-made man, Sir Michael Conveyer, displays a thorough-going desire to relieve the personal character of the measure, and the admirable grasp of his or her intellectual enlightenment and the training given to the personal character in the schools. Having assumed the responsibility of imparting principles of instruction, Sir Michael Conveyer, says, 'is to discharge the duty efficiently, and to adopt precautions to prevent avoidable abuse or waste of its efforts.' The experiences of others abroad, reveals the benefit of world and from economic and moral standpoint, of providing facilities for the easy acquisition of broader and more useful knowledge than that which enables a child to cope with the world.

The modern achievements of Switzerland, Germany, and Denmark demonstrate that the expenditure of State revenue on higher and technical instruction is a dollar for dollar return on the people's investment. It is comparable with "costing bread on the waters," which shall be seen again after many days. The security, good government, and high moral and cultural needs of the country demand that the claims of the raising race to a good working mental equipment shall be properly satisfied. An ancient classical author advantaged by the process. Generality is one of the most important in every age—Men derive no greater advantage from a liberal education than that it tends to soften and polish their national spirit. In providing knowledge and training their habits, thus producing "evenness of temper, and banishing all extremes." The example of Denmark, in particular strikingly shows that the intellectual quickening by the people's moral and intellectual equipment, and add zest and interest to life. The Danes have made their mark as dairy farmers chiefly because of the liberal education they receive.

The Minister carefully emphasized the fact that the new proposals do not lessen the obligations of parents. The earliest and strongest impressions—impressions which shape his or her character—are formed in the home, and the State cannot undertake to relieve parents of the sole duty of attending to the religious and ethical training of their children. The success of such an undertaking may be properly regarded as helpful to the agencies which are specially concerned in the children's spiritual welfare. The existence of a righteous social order founded on the principles of faith and moral and political capacities during the critical period of adolescence the State will perform practical and humane service, for which it should be commended. It will proclaim its will, not only when saving boys and girls from indolent habits or monstrous drudgery, but also when impressing them with the seriousness of living and the value of their faculties. The Government proposes to stop short of the third rate of elementary education at the age of 14 years; but what if the "continuation classes" held in the evenings should be properly attended? The taxpayers ought to have the satisfaction of knowing whether their children are being educated. The validity of institutions is not thrown away. The principle of local option on the subject may meet the difficulty, but the insistence of the public local authorities might in certain cases establish the Education Department's good work. Probably the need will be found for the exercise eventually of more extended powers than the Bill provides. In this respect the Government does not err on the side of boldness. Its attitude towards the Adelaide School of Mines and Industries is peculiarly weak and halting, as well as illogical and inconsistent. Conveyer maintains that this institution "undoubtedly will have to be taken over, because it is a national work of the State," and yet he has omitted to provide this effect from a much more comprehensive and complete. No wonder that the objection raised upon the point by the Leader of the Opposition evoked a chorus of approving ejaculations.

The Bill embodies Mr. Williams' excellent idea of "a system of education beginning with thoroughly efficient primary schools, doteering into higher primary and secondary schools, which prepare their pupils for the technical institutions and the University." Details of the scheme will require to be worked out and applied by a master mind. Mr. Conveyer made no reference to the financial aspect of the subject, or to the difficulty of securing and equipping the needful new staff of instructors. Obviously the project will involve heavy immediate expenditure, which will call for the exercise of the utmost prudence in order to secure the best results; and the training and selection of teachers will require great care.

The Bill, unlike its predecessor, is based on a technical instruction, the Minister—possibly through the difficulty of compressing all the forces of the subject into a single address—failed to indicate the supreme importance of the industrial education of our young people. South Australia must not at this stage make the mistake of creating a population of artisans, at the expense of the development of her vast untapped landed inheritance. Instruction in agriculture in the secondary schools should be made readily available to town dwellers, who may thus be induced to enter upon a career which is wholly beneficial to the State. In the technical schools the girls ought to be taught domestic economy and the arts which will assist them to become thrifty housewives and happy mothers.

The Bill is designed to effect most important reforms, and it ought to be most carefully studied by the people as well as by the Parliament.