

The Daily Herald
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THE WORKERS' EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

MR. MANSBRIDGE ON AUSTRALIA

"MARVELLOUS PROGRESS IN EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION."

Having only just returned from an extended visit to Australia in connection with the Workers' Educational Association, Mr. Albert Mansbridge has given some interesting facts to the London press.

"I was invited," he said, "to go to Australia as a result of the debate held at the recent congress of universities of London on the subject of the extramural work of the universities, and more particularly because of the facts that I was able to present to that body as to what had been done by the Workers' Educational Association in providing the working people of this country with educational facilities up to university standards. My object in accepting the invitation was not only to impart the information that was needed, but to enquire into the educational organisation of the Commonwealth, and generally to learn what I could of the conditions overseas. I have come back more than ever convinced of the necessity of getting the people in this country thoroughly interested in the life of our fellow-citizens of the British Commonwealth if ever we are to get reasonable co-operation. The first and most lasting impression that I have got from my tour is one that no visitor can help acquiring. It is an impression of the tremendous constructive intelligence possessed by the Australians and their capacity for initiating thoroughly sound experiments. It is difficult to conceive that until Federation was effected, and even to some extent to-day, Australia consists of six different groups round about the six capital cities. The members of these groups, though to the casual visitor they appeared almost identical are, in fact, absolutely diverse. Every problem that arises has to be settled to meet six different sets of conditions, and the fact of the different gauges on the railways is typical of the essential variation. No doubt the result of Federation will be that these differences will tend to disappear. The appointment of Interstate Commissioners appealed to me as a most notable event, and the Commissioners struck me as the most impressive men I met in the course of my journey. I was fortunate in meeting every section of thought in the country, from the organised workers in Australia, who gave me a most hearty reception, to the members of the various Governments, who were most cordial in their welcome.

Progress in Educational Administration.

"I can only express my profound admiration for the marvellous progress that has been made in educational administration. There seemed to be nothing in the experimental stage in England that was not being duplicated in Australia, with the modifications necessary for a different environment. For instance, in Sydney the Montessori system is working as a complete experiment, and its adaptation to the ordinary classes of young children has demonstrated its success not only in promoting the happiness of the classes but in securing educational efficiency of the highest order. During the last three years the New South Wales Government has been making a very serious attempt to secure equality of educational opportunity, and there is now a real way open from the school in the backblock to the University even for the poor child whose parents have caught the enthusiasm for education. There are no money or class obstacles in the way if the parents

are determined and the child has reasonable capacity. In Queensland the school doctor pursues his journeys in the backblocks to the very smallest groups of school children, and even follows in the wake of the travelling teacher. In fact, throughout Australia educational administration is at a very high level, and almost without exception the administrators are big men not merely administrators, but educational enthusiasts as well. Education is really a main plank in politics, and when the New South Wales Government were criticised on the ground of over-expenditure they were able confidently to advance the explanation that the extra expenditure had gone on education. Would an English Government, I wonder, be able to put forward such a defence?

Australian Universities.

"The six Australian universities are at present in different stages of development. The University of Tasmania, owing to the enthusiasm of its old graduates, is obviously entering on a fresh period of activity. Those in Queensland and Western Australia seemed to me to be rather in the experimental stage. The universities of Adelaide, Melbourne, and Sydney have a long record of achievement behind them, and have now come to a position where by their own inspiration and by the developing force of Australia they are re-organising themselves to meet new needs. At Melbourne for instance, there has been an exhaustive investigation and a recommendation of far-reaching reforms. One thing is certain. They are powerful institutions in close touch with the other universities of the world, and are pressing forward to a realisation of the true university ideal. As regards the work with which I am specially concerned, the universities, the workpeople and the general public received what I said with enthusiasm. Since my visit tutorial classes have already been started, and Mr. Meredith Atkinson has been appointed to look after them. The New South Wales Government has made a grant of £1000 towards the work, and the Tasmanian Government has granted £500, while I have been asked to nominate a candidate to Sir John McCall to act as tutor in this connection for the University of Tasmania.

"I had, unfortunately, very little time to spend in Canada, and I gained only a few general ideas. I found everyone in the large cities anxious to hear about educational matters in England, and it was satisfying to me to learn that, as a result of an account that I published of the working of University tutorial classes a class of the sort has been started in Toronto.

"Looking back on the tour, I feel that it has been a success. In a period of 108 days I addressed 109 meetings, and had the satisfaction of leaving behind me six Workers' Educational Associations in Australia. On my return home I find that the movement in this country is spreading rapidly; so much so, that in England alone there are now 168 branches, while the parallel movement in Scotland is progressing well. There can be no doubt," Mr. Mansbridge concluded, "that the movement meets a very genuine demand, and that it is one that is gaining the whole-hearted support of the workers, both in this country and in Greater Britain overseas."

THE BROOKMAN SCHOLARSHIP.

The Brookman Scholarship, which is at present a topic of conversation in the musical world, was instituted by the late Mr. George Brookman. It is valued at £20 per annum for three years, and is competed for on similar lines, as are laid down for the Elder Scholarship. The age limits have been extended by adding two years to the upper limit, specified for the Elder Scholarship, which are:—Singing, 17 to 26; pianoforte playing, 12 to 20; violin playing, 12 to 20; organ playing, 12 to 21; violoncello, 12 to 20. The scholarship shall only be offered for competition among Australasian students of music, and shall entitle the holder to free tuition, in one principal, and one or more secondary subjects, which are to be approved by the director. The holder shall also be exempt from payment of all fees in the Associate of Music course, except the fee for the diploma. The successful candidate will enter upon his or her studies forthwith, and will proceed to work for the diploma.

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UNIVERSITY STUDENTS AT RENMARK.

To the Editor.

Sir—I read with much amusement your report of Mr. Lundie's little outburst at Renmark. As a University student who has been up to Renmark for several years, I have some experience of the fruit-growing industry on the Murray. Mr. Lundie seems to have a mortal dread of us University boys. We thank him for the compliment. We never regarded ourselves as being formidable before. Mr. Lundie remarks that the students are the sons of rich parents, thereby showing his ignorance of University matters. Some few may be so, but the majority go to Renmark to earn part of their fees or to supplement their yearly allowances, which in some cases are necessarily small. I wonder if Mr. Lundie has tried to exist on 2/6 per week for tobacco, train fares, tram fares, &c. If he has, he will perhaps extend a little sympathy to us. Moreover, we boys do not go up the river to any grower. We go up to friends or growers who have in previous years had other students up there. Mr. Lundie says "the English Johnnie" is lured to picking by promises of dances, &c., given by the growers—which promises are never fulfilled. During the last fruit season the employes on one block—two English Johnnies and myself—enjoyed two picture parties, one musical evening, and a whole day picnic, besides several meals at the house, all at the expense of the block owner. Mr. Lundie goes on to say that the student prefers to go to Renmark on account of contract rates which are prevalent nearer town not being in vogue at Renmark. If Mr. Lundie had ever been through the heartrending grind of the three months before the final exams, he would perhaps see why we want to get right away from the city and as much in the open air as possible. The river also offers many charms, such as fishing, swimming, &c., which cannot be had nearer town. For what is more pleasant than a swim in the river after a day's work in the sun and dust? From what the report states, an outsider would conclude that the whole University, lock, stock, and barrel, toured up to Renmark, and not a few dozen students who have to struggle to get through their course, and struggle hard, too.—I am, &c.,
PATELLA.