

Daily Herald.
January 25th 15.

EDUCATION APPOINTMENTS.

From "Verbum Sap":—On Wednesday last the ex-Minister of Education (Hon. H. Peake) published a statement justifying, or attempting to justify, his action re the appointment to Murray Bridge, but he did not tell the public that the two best positions vacant at Christmas—Murray Bridge and Croydon—were both given to Germans!

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The undermentioned awards have been approved by the council of the University of Adelaide:—Angas Engineering Exhibition, H. W. Stempel; Hartley Studentship, D. C. Cooper; John Bagot Scholarship, Mary M. Purtin.

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THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

LABOR'S GREAT WORK FOR IMPROVEMENT

ADDRESS BY MR. THOMAS RYAN

It has been said that the new Attorney-General and Minister of Education (Hon. H. Angas Parsons) intends to make his coming fight in the Sturt electorate on the question of education. If this be so, he meets in Mr. T. Ryan an opponent who will test his abilities to the very utmost. Twenty years of close attention to educational matters throughout Australia have developed Mr. Ryan's grasp of the subject to an amazing extent. In what was practically his opening speech of the campaign, delivered at the Botanic Park yesterday afternoon, Mr. Ryan gave evidence of this fact. He chose as his subject, "Some Phases of the Education System in the Southern Hemisphere," and held a large audience intensely interested with a thoughtful and convincing address.

Definite Policy Needed.

The greatest need of Australian educational administration, said Mr. Ryan, was a settled and definite policy—that would not vary according to the whim of the Minister in power. The policy must also be a national policy. Although education in South Australia has advanced considerably in the last decade it was by no means perfect, nor would perfection be achieved until there arrived a sympathetic administration. In his capacity as chairman of the Royal Commission on Education he had been enabled to acquire an insight into the finest educational systems in the Southern Hemisphere, and it was with regret that he had to admit that in South Australia the training of the child mind had not reached the high standard that had been achieved elsewhere. The Education Commission had done a splendid work, and its recommendations covered ground that had long been ignored. Unfortunately those recommendations had not yet been put into effect. Interested as the Liberals claimed to be in the welfare of the child, they had not hesitated to shelve the commission's report. The electors could take it for granted that with the return of a Labor Government at the forthcoming elections the very earliest opportunity would be taken to bring the recommendations into being. (Hear, hear.)

The Labor Party's Ideal.

The attitude of the Labor Party on the subject of education was well defined. The party stood for—(a) Compulsory age of attendance at schools to be raised from 13 to 14 years; (b) extension of free education to all citizens of the State up to and inclusive of universities; and (c) school books and requirements for school children to be free. (Hear, hear.)



MR. THOS. RYAN.

Who opened his campaign at the Botanic Park yesterday.

was a remarkable thing that in every State members of the Labor Party were found to be in very close association with the education movement. In South Australia they remembered such men as McPherson, Price, and Batchelor—pioneers of the democratising of education—and were grateful to them for the part they had played in the inauguration of a system that was to be accessible to all.

Not Followed Out.

Since the passing away of Labor's pioneers in the field of education what had the Liberals done to heighten the efficiency of the machine? Little or nothing. There had been permitted to grow up a movement towards centralisation. The weaker centres suffered so that the stronger might thrive. Schools at such places as Hergott and Kangaroo Island were found to be in charge of poorly trained teachers. The children attending such schools were probably the hardest of all to educate. Instead of giving them the benefit of men or women who were thoroughly competent they were handed over to a girl who had received about six months' training in a model school in Adelaide. What was the use of that? Western Australia, where there was a Labor Government, had done better. There the poorer the school the better the teacher was the principle adopted. The idea was to solve the problems of the present position, not to fly to fresh ones. (Applause.) Western Australia had resolutely faced the question of improving its educational system. One of the first actions of the Scaddan Government was to make arrangements for the establishment of a University of Western Australia. The system had been revolutionised as compared with that of 10 years ago, and a great share of the credit belonged to the Labor Party. Similarly the Labor Party in Victoria, mainly through the efforts of Mr. Lemmon, had been responsible for the establishment of trade schools. In that State the authorities now realised that something else was needed besides men who wore white collars and girls who wore silk hats. Because a girl could play "Nellie Bly" or "Tipperary" nowadays the authorities did not regard her education as complete. They expected her to be able to wash and sweep, to be able to bake scones, or make a bonnet for the baby. And in the trade shops the boys followed their natural bent until they found a trade which suited them. From the trade shops to the technical schools, and then to the workshop was the progress of the modern youth, and even then he was not cut adrift from sources of education, for he was able to attend university extension lectures, and thus add to his brain power and capability. It might be remembered that a short while ago a deputation waited on the then Minister of Education (Hon. A. H. Peake) and asked for a vote of £1000 so that university extension lectures, under the auspices of the Workers' Educational Association, might be carried on in South Australia. Mr. Peake sympathised with the deputation, but when it came to granting £1000 here he stopped. "The object is desirable," he said, "but not yet." (Laughter.)

The "Not-Yet" Party.

In two words might be expressed the attitude of the Peake party towards other things than education. It was the "not-yet" party in regard to water, the price of wheat, and the starting of work for the unemployed. It would be the "not-yet" party as long as it remained in power. Peculiarly enough, these were the people who decried the Labor Party's work for the betterment of education. It was comforting, on the other hand, to hear the remarks of such men as Professors Orme Masson and Harrison Moore, both of the Melbourne University, and both of whom declared that if Labor men were debarred from the universities it might not affect the Labor Party, but it would be a great loss to the educational systems of the States. In support of this he would say, "Name the university system of any State you like, and I will show you where the Labor Party has worked for its good, where the Liberals have done nothing more than promise." Could there be a better example than the work of the Minister of Education in New South Wales (Mr. Carmichael), who was acknowledged to be the finest administrator of that particular department the mother State had ever possessed? (Applause.) In Queensland they had the Leader of the State Opposition (Mr. Ryan), a brilliant educationist, who was responsible for many of the reforms carried out in Queensland during recent years. To him and to the party behind him Queensland owed its present system of

technical and domestic education, for they had forced Parliament to agree to an authorising Bill after a sitting which lasted two days and two nights. But here in South Australia what had been the response to the Labor Party's efforts? Were they to be satisfied simply because a rich man was given the portfolio of education and went round looking at the schools while Parliament was not sitting? Were they to be satisfied because that very new Minister had suggested that it would be well for some of the teachers and inspectors to take a holiday in the other States once in a while? With confidence he might assume the answer to be an emphatic "No." The Government had had an opportunity to attest its sincerity when Mr. Coneybeer moved and Mr. Thompson Green seconded the adoption of the Education Commission's report. On that occasion not a Minister said a word. Neither did Mr. Parsons, yet he had been made Minister of Education. The commission had cost £6000, and apparently the Peake Government did not consider its labors worthy of consideration.

The Reformatory System.

In most of the States the reformatory system had in recent years undergone a radical change. It had been proved that the fence before the cliff was far more efficacious than the ambulance down in the valley, and on those lines great improvements had been wrought. South Australia was the one notable exception. Here at the Magill Reformatory were to be found the antediluvian methods of 20 years ago. Those who had followed the evidence of the Education Commission would remember the 'legirons' incident. What had been said was true. On one occasion he with Messrs. Styles, Coneybeer, and Green had visited Magill, and had actually seen for themselves the unfortunate lads legironed and manacled together. (Cries of "Shame" and "Rotten.") We wished it to be understood that this was no fault of the officers of the reformatory. They had to act as directed by the rules. The man who was to blame was the Chief Secretary (Mr. Bice). ("Shame.") How different was the system in New Zealand. There he was shown an institution in which there were over 400 young people, not one of whom was discontented. The institution stood in spacious grounds, and was beautifully situated. The inmates were educated, taught useful trades, and were paid a small sum each week, portion being set aside so that when they went out into the world again they would have a nice little sum to start with. What education did the Magill boys get? In evidence the commission learned that the only time upon which the boys were given anything approaching an education was for an hour in the chapel on Sunday afternoons. Yet in that institution there had been nine men to look after 31 boys. It cost on an average 42/- per inmate per week to maintain the Magill institution, whereas at the Roman Catholic Home at Brooklyn Park it cost only 6/-, and there Father Healey was able to