

Mr. Green said he was a member of the Education Commission, and in the course of the enquiry he found not only a number of directions in which the South Australian system could be improved, but also many reasons for being justifiably proud. The abnormal size of the classes was certainly a grievance of the teachers, and something should be done to remedy that fault. The only possible way in which an education system could be regarded as costing too much would be if the results were poor. But if headway was not being made there was always a remedy. If the teaching staff was not giving all that could be expected the department should be made sufficiently attractive to men and women who would obtain better results. The accommodation provided for teachers could sometimes be much better. They had been told dreadful things of the experiences of young girls sent out by the Education Department without enquiry having been made as to the housing accommodation. Specialisation in study was desirable. In the past there had been too much generalisation in the instruction of the children. After the bent of the child had been discovered he should be trained to develop talents in that direction. Technical and domestic education was all-important. It was not too much to compel the children to continue at school until they attained the age of 14, or even 15. To keep children at school—away from the usual employments which they sought as soon as they left—for an extra year or two would tend to improve the physique of the nation. He supported the Bill, but hoped in Committee to effect improvements.

Mr. Barwell said he had been for 14 or 15 years, and still was, president of the Port Pirie School of Mines, and he had a deep interest in education. At first he had not agreed with the contention of the leader of the Opposition that the introduction of the Bill was inopportune, and that the expenditure under this Bill should only be made upon resolution of both Houses of Parliament. Mr. Peake said that he (Mr. Barwell) did not see eye to eye with him, because he had thought the Bill too long-delayed, and that certain reforms in the education system were urgent. But now he had an open mind upon the question whether at the present time Parliament should make it possible for the Government to spend large sums of money on education. On the whole, however, he could not see eye to eye with the leader of the Opposition. Alterations could be made in the law relating to education, and necessary reforms instituted without the expenditure of money. It would be imperative to proceed cautiously and with due regard to the financial position. It was reported in the lobbies that this Bill was to be submitted to a Committee of both Houses. He asked the Premier if the report was well founded.

The Premier—No; it is not the intention to do that.

Mr. Barwell said if that had been the intention of the Government he could not understand the Premier allowing the debate to proceed.

Mr. Price—Did you have a caucus meeting and find that out?

Mr. Ryan—It is the first we have heard of it.

Mr. Barwell said, in contradistinction to the views of Mr. Coombe, he believed there never had been a time when there existed a more widespread desire for education among the people of the State. The Labor Party had done a great deal in the matter of education. The great Labor movement which had made such strides during the last quarter of a century, although it was open to reproaches, had on the whole been an upward movement.

Mr. Reidy (crossing the floor of the House)—I am coming over near you.

Mr. Barwell said that it had been an upward movement had been proved by the action of the Labor Party in regard to education. He trusted members opposite would not think he had become a convert to the cause of Labor, because their minds might be disabused when they observed his attitude to the Adult Suffrage Bill and the Arbitration Bill.

Mr. Ryan—We are thankful for each blessing as it falls upon us.

Mr. Barwell was pleased to shower blessings upon the party when it deserved them. The Montessori teaching was no doubt a very good system of kindergarten education, but its introduction would mean the expenditure of a fairly large sum, and it was still in the experimental stage. It would be better to hold over its introduction, and the money could probably be better used in other direc-

tions. The countries that would make the greatest advance in the near future would be those that paid most attention to technical education. The proposed Advisory Council of Education would be a great improvement on the present system. If the classification board was to be composed entirely of men engaged in primary education, it should not deal with all classes of teachers. If the school committees were to be successful they must have greater power conceded to them than was the case at present with the boards of advice. He hoped the Bill would be passed with certain amendments, and that the Government would get about the gradual process of improvement, which was absolutely necessary, and which would be rendered possible if the Bill became law.

Mr. Travers said there were parts of the Bill he was prepared to support, but if the measure was passed it should not come into operation until both Houses of Parliament agreed to that being done. He approved of the general principle of co-ordinating institutions for technical and agricultural education with the general system. A smaller board would be more efficient than the proposed Advisory Council. The people of the outside districts were at an undoubted disadvantage so far as education was concerned. They never seemed to have a properly trained teacher.

The Hon. J. Verran said there were some points in the Bill he was not disposed to support, but the House would direct its energies in Committee to moulding the Bill into a form in which it would be acceptable to the people as a whole. The Education Commission had done too much. It had recommended too many changes at one time. He did not object to the manner in which the Commission had travelled in search of information. It would be wise to send the Director of Education to the Continent of Europe every four years to study methods. He agreed with the proposals of the Bill in regard to attendance upon every school day.

Mr. Nicolls said the compulsory clauses of the Bill might be all very well for the town, but they should not be the same for the country. Many of the subjects taught in the schools to-day were absolutely useless in helping the children to future careers. In place of spending money on the Montessori system it should be devoted to the building of new schools in the country districts, where they were urgently needed.

Mr. Robinson agreed that it was advisable to have an ideal in their education system. More attention should be paid to primary instruction. Compulsory attendance on every school day was proper in the best interests of the children. They should so reorganise the educational system as to give the teachers classes of not more than 20 pupils. It was questionable whether the Montessori teaching, which had proved successful elsewhere, would apply to local ideas. The money to be spent on it could be devoted more advantageously to giving greater school facilities to people in such districts as Flinders and Albert, where children were growing up in absolute ignorance. The education system of South Australia had to a certain extent got hide-bound, and they should get the best intellects procurable from anywhere to fill the leading positions.

The Hon. L. O'Loughlin—You would not go outside the department, would you?

Mr. Robinson said it was absolutely necessary to get new blood into the Education Department, just as it was necessary to get new blood into their flocks of Shorthorns and Merinos.

Mr. James said the Montessori system would take children away from their mothers' influence at too early an age.

On the motion of the Hon. L. O'Loughlin the debate was adjourned until the following day.

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MR. VERRAN IN EXPLANATION.

"NOT WHAT I INTENDED."

When the House of Assembly met on Wednesday the Hon. J. Verran said he desired to make a personal explanation in relation to his references on the previous day to the Adelaide School of Mines and Industries. He found on reading the report of his remarks that he appeared to have said one thing and had another in his mind. He had stated—"There were a lot of people in the city who did not like Sir Langdon Bonython about this job, and when he (Mr. Verran) was in office they came to him and said so and so. He (Mr. Verran) asked why should he be removed." He admitted having made that statement on the previous day, but it was not what he had intended. He was not blaming the reporters, as they were very kind to him, and always reported what he said. However, he wanted to correct the impression created. At the time referred to there was a desire to take away from the School of Mines a room which belonged to it at the Exhibition Building. He should have said that the University at that time was very anxious to get the control of the School of Mines out of the hands of Sir Langdon Bonython.

The Commissioner of Public Works—
And you did not agree with them?

The Hon. J. Verran—No.

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DEGREES CONFERRED.

GRADUATES OFF TO THE FRONT.

An enthusiastic scene was witnessed in the Prince of Wales Theatre at the Adelaide University on Wednesday afternoon, when a special congregation was held for the purpose of conferring degrees. The Chancellor of the University (Sir Samuel Way, Bart.) presided, and there were present the Vice-Chancellor (Mr. Justice Murray), the Warden of the Senate (Mr. F. Chapple, C.M.G.), the Dean of the Faculty of Medicine (Professor E. C. Stirling), the Dean of the Faculty of Laws (Professor Jethro Brown), the Dean of the Faculty of Science (Professor R. W. Chapman), Professors E. H. Rennie and W. Mitchell, Dr. B. Pouiton, Mr. M. M. Maughan, Mr. Talbot Smith (members of the council), professors, and members of the senate.

Dr. Bevan Honored.

The degree of bachelor of laws (ad eundem gradum) was conferred upon the Rev. Dr. L. D. Bevan, LL.B., University of London. He was presented by Professor Brown, who referred to his fine record. "Dr. Bevan," said Professor Brown, "was first Greek prizeman at the University College School, London, and he gained first-class honors in logic and philosophy, the exhibition in English, and first-class honors and the degree of bachelor of laws at the New College and University College, London. He afterwards graduated as doctor of divinity at the Princeton University, America. He was a member of the council of the Working Men's College, London, and lecturer on English language and literature, 1866-76, and became professor of ecclesiastical history in the Congregational College of Victoria in 1887. In 1893 he was made pastor of the Collins-street Church, Melbourne, and he is now the principal of Parkin College, Adelaide."

The Chancellor said it would be impossible for him to exaggerate the pleasure and honor he felt in conferring the degree upon Dr. Bevan. His record went a good many years back. They were proud of his distinction, and especially proud to include him amongst their members. He hoped they would often see Dr. Bevan's picturesque form. (Applause.)