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THE BIG MESSINES EXPLOSION

Professor David was interviewed on his return to Sydney from the war and in his account of the work of the tunnelling forces he referred to the famous explosion which sent Messines Ridge sky-high. "The famous Hill 60," said the professor, "was finally tunnelled under by No. 1 Tunnelling Company of the Australian Mining Corps. The mines varied in depth from 70 to 110 ft., and in many cases were carried for over 100 yards inside the enemy's lines. The tunnels were distributed along an arc convex towards our own troops about ten miles in length. Without doubt the most spectacular sight of the whole war on that front was the explosion of these 19 great mines, many of them containing over 40 tons of the high explosive ammonal. Altogether there was over a million pounds of high explosive used. For an hour or two before the moment fixed for the explosion—zero was 2.50 a.m.—almost complete silence reigned on the front. At zero the mines were simultaneously fired. To those who were gazing eagerly in the direction of the mines, in the faint grey light that separates darkness and dawn, nothing at first was to be seen except the star shells of the enemy, evidently getting uneasy. The next moment there was a severe earthquake shock, so great that the ground seemed to rock several inches to and fro. In the city of Lille, 12 miles from the nearest mine, the earthquake was so pronounced that all the inhabitants rushed into the streets, fearing that the buildings would fall upon them. The next moment the earth opened at 19 different spots, and 19 red roses sprang out of the ground, ascending comparatively slowly, gaining in breadth until the petals fell apart, and brilliant gases of all the colors of the rainbow were discharged. These vast pillars of fire appeared square, apparently retaining the shape of the mining chambers in which they had been fired. Intense whiteness then took the place of the blackness, as masses of clay, buildings, guns, gun-emplacements, dugouts, and dead bodies of the Germans were hurled high into the air. Pillars of cloud succeeded the pillars of fire, and as these died down the most tremendous barrage of artillery seen in the war opened. The storm troops swept after the barrage over what had been a moment before a veritable Gibraltar, and it is a matter of history that this seemingly impregnable ridge was quickly carried with little loss. Our advance was to the depth of several miles. Had the dreadful panic of the enemy been expected we might have rushed Lille on that occasion." Professor David was careful to state that this tremendous mining achievement was not entirely due to the Australian Mining Corps, as large bodies of Imperial tunnelling companies contributed.

THE GOSPEL OF HAPPINESS.

Health, Homes, and Education.

As an authority on sociology in relation to industrial affairs, Mr. Gerald Mussen (industrial adviser to the Broken Hill Associated Smelters at Port Pirie) has few, if any, equals in Australia; and to those connected with industrial reform the lecture which he delivered at Victoria Hall, Gawler place, on Friday night was of paramount interest. Mr. Mussen, who is a convincing speaker, took as his subject "The humanizing of commerce and industry." There was a large audience. The lecturer said the views he would express were his personal views. He was not speaking on behalf of any of the companies to which he acted as industrial adviser. Did commerce and industry require humanizing? Their concern lay with the existing conditions of the lives of the people, and not with what brought those conditions about. All through the world a mighty ferment was working. The attitude of folding their hands, and waiting with humility to see what would happen was traitorous to their great homeland, Australia. If conditions existed to-day that were wrong and unfair, they had no one but themselves to blame. The great war would have been fought in vain if it had not made them kinder to one another and determined to make the world in general, and Australia in particular, a better place to live in.

—Seeming War Prosperity.—

There were plenty of people in the community who mistakenly used the volume of Australia's oversea trade as the gauge of their prosperity, said the lecturer. In 1916-17 the oversea trade figures were a record, representing £35 14/5 a head. If that gauge of prosperity was accepted as economically sound, which it was not, it would puzzle an investigator to explain why that seeming prosperity had been accompanied by the most widespread and numerous strikes Australia had ever known. Clearly there were enormous monetary transactions in 1917, and no doubt somebody enjoyed great prosperity, but 173,970 employers became involved in 44 strikes, losing 4,590,658 days' work, representing £2,594,808 in wages. They all knew that their seeming prosperity was accompanied by a great increase in the cost of living. One could not deny that a country which permitted in time of war some of its citizens to suffer want while others did not know how to spend their gains was, to say the least, badly governed; and a social system which produced such results required amendment.

—Slaves of Money.—

Some of the faults of the system under which they were working were quite obvious. They produced annually about £200,000,000 worth of products. In 1917, owing to high prices, production went up to £270,427,000 in value. Rather less than half the population of Australia was engaged in production (trade and commerce). They could probably reckon upon 2,200,000 producers, workers, and traders. The future occupations of their youth were matters of blind choice dictated by fancy, necessity, or accident. There was an absolute lack of organization and direction, both as regarded occupation and actual production. The community had a very direct interest in seeing that no productive effort was wasted. Their manufacturing system was haphazard. Each manufacturer made his own guess, threw in one or two varieties as new season's patterns, and hustled his salesmen out on to the road to find buyers. If the market was flooded with cheap Asiatic or foreign stuff the business failed, the employees were thrown out of employment, and thousands of pounds' worth of goods were left in the storeroom. They laughed at the manufacturer for his shortsightedness, but they should weep for him and his employees, as, in the end, the community had to pay for his mistaken effort of production. Australia had to compete against an organized campaign in other parts of the world, for eliminating waste effort, and securing efficiency in production, and it was time they woke up on the business side. Their system of distribution could not be more ludicrous than it was at present. It was

no advantage to the community to have scores of agents selling and reselling lines of goods, even if they did make a good living. They had become slaves of money. In future, he suggested, humanity would have to have first consideration. Five years ago the majority of them were simply money grubbing. The war, however, had cemented the oneness of the Australian people, and the old callous indifference to suffering and misery must go.

—The Rights of Man.—

Great Britain had set a worthy example in the housing problem, and the nationalization of the milk supply. The key to all the changes that were taking place was the gospel of happiness. It meant the recognition of the right of every citizen to live a life of happiness. It meant the true realization of the equality of men, and that the object of life was happiness, not money. Money was only a means to an end. The true meaning of all the industrial unrest so marked of recent years was that the great mass of people had been trying to give voice to their craving and right to a share of the happiness of the world. Because their demands had been usually met in terms of money, resistance had been offered, and strikes had occurred, with loss to the community and hideous suffering to many. Money could not buy the conditions essential to happiness. Health was the basis of all national happiness. It was the greatest asset of a nation. They had got to realize quickly that their personal obligation as members of the community each to the other was to see that all had the basic conditions essential to human happiness. If they could remove sickness from their midst the good health resulting would increase their production by more than £12,500,000 a year. After health the next essential to happiness was a system of proper education. National ideals should find a foremost place in that system. To attain happiness, even if a man had good health and a good education, it was necessary for him to have a good home. In the past they had left the housing problem to the individual, with disastrous results. The sooner they followed Great Britain's example and provided suitable homes for all the better. A great housing scheme in Australia would have to be put into the hands of practical men.

—Townplanning Essential.—

Added to the conditions of health, education, and homes, decent town provisions with adequate facilities for parks and baths for the enjoyment of a man and his family, were essential. He was rather hopeful of the birth of a new sense of civic pride. It seemed possible to him that each community could be so stimulated that it might be induced to organize its forces, its money and its resources to make for itself any facilities that were needed. That that was practicable had been shown at Port Pirie. To complete the basis of his happiness, a man must also be placed in the position of receiving wages at a rate which would leave him an adequate margin after having paid his cost of living. It was essential that each person should have free money to spend on his or her hobby or pleasure or personal improvement. In earning these wages each must work under decent conditions, in a healthy atmosphere, where there was no suspicion of tyranny. If he had correctly stated the basic conditions for material happiness, it was not difficult to understand that every advantage gained by trades unionism was doomed to failure, and that the fruits of every successful strike would be turned to dead sea fruit.

—A Strike Antidote.—

No wonder then that the world was filled with great unrest. People were disgusted with their failure to achieve happiness. In his opinion the provision of the conditions which he had set out would end industrial unrest. That it had not succeeded in doing it at Port Pirie already was not due to the failure of the policy, but to the fact that it was impossible for a single industry to cover the whole field required. The Associated Smelters had gone a considerable distance along the road. The smelters employes at Port Pirie could claim the distinction of never having lost one hour in the production of lead during the period of the war. At Port Pirie the health of the employes was considered paramount, and everything possible was being done to protect and safeguard it. Mr. Mussen outlined fully the scheme inaugurated at Port Pirie by the Broken Hill Associated Smelters Proprietary, Limited, all the activities in connection with which, he said, were based upon the gospel of happiness. In conclusion, he remarked that they were all members of one big union—the Great Australian union. It covered every man, woman, and child in the community. They wanted to help each other, but it was so difficult to find practical ways and means. The evolution would be slow, and could only come from sustained thought, effort, and planning. Therefore they must be patient.

MELBOURNE UNIVERSITY.

GOVERNMENT'S CONDITIONAL GIFT.

MELBOURNE, May 14. Replying to-day to a deputation representing the University Council, the Premier (Mr. Lawson) promised £200,000 for new buildings, provided that £50,000 to £100,000 is raised privately.

Argus 15.5.19.

UNIVERSITY NEEDS

£200,000 FOR BUILDINGS.

Increased Grant in Abovance.

Something in the tone of an ultimatum was presented to the Premier (Mr. Lawson) yesterday by a deputation, about 40 strong, representing the University Council, the Senate, the Professorial Board, and the Graduates Association. Several speakers stated that if the University did not secure increased financial assistance, it would be forced to place a limit on the numbers of students. Mr. Lawson promised, subject to the approval of Parliament, to provide up to £200,000 for buildings, and some measure of increase in the yearly grant. The Minister for Education (Mr. Hutchinson), the Director of Education (Mr. Tate), and the Under-Treasurer (Mr. Minogue), were present with the Premier. Mr. Solly, M.L.A., introduced the deputation.

A summary, showing the assistance desired, had been prepared and put before Ministers by the Council. It set out that the number of students had risen from 616 in 1904 to 1,741 in 1919, and set out the following as "absolutely urgent requirements" in the way of building:—

Table with 2 columns: Category and Amount (£). Rows include Arts and Education (90,000), Anatomy Dept. (50,000), Botanical (10,000), Geological (15,000), and Total (165,000).

With regard to the annual grant, the memorandum pointed out that the Council had just voted £5,500 for new appointments. To cover contingencies and increases in the number of students, the Council asked for an increase of £9,000 a year. It desired to see the grant fixed at £30,000 a year for 10 years, exclusive of the grant to the Veterinary School. The Council also asked for an extra £2,000 a year to pay the salary of a Principal.

In addition, an additional £7,000 a year, making a grand total with the present grant of £39,000 a year, was asked for new courses of study, as follows:—

Table with 2 columns: Category and Amount (£). Rows include Extension Dept. (1,500), Tutorial Classes (750), School of Commerce (3,000), Industrial Science (1,000), and Incidental expenses (750).

Total ... 7,000. The total amount of the requests was therefore:—

Table with 2 columns: Category and Amount (£). Rows include Capital expenditure (165,000) and Increased annual grant (18,000).

The Claims Urged.

The Vice-Chancellor (Sir John Grice) said that the housing was utterly inadequate. The Council held that it would be committing a breach of contract with the students if it could not give them decent conditions. The plans drawn up in 1914 would mean the completing of the finest piece of Gothic architecture in Melbourne, which had been unfinished for 60 years. They had put down £165,000 for buildings, but the Government architect had just told them that the cost would probably be £190,000. Unless conditions were improved, Victorian country students would be driven to Sydney. It was cruelly hard on the lads who went straight from school to the front or enlisted from the University, that they should have to come back to study in cramped uncongenial conditions. No fewer than 1,800 University men went to the war, of whom 198 had given their lives. There could be no better memorial hall than worthy University buildings (Hear, hear.)

Sir James Barrett urged the claims of the new courses, which were, he said, new to Victoria, but not new in other parts of the world, nor in some of the other States (Hear, hear.)

EDUCATION AND EFFICIENCY.

From "EDUCATION":—The Register on May 3 states:—"Never before in the history of the Empire has education been of such vital importance as it is to-day—the education which aims at the training and efficiency of the whole people so that the nation may be properly equipped for the economic struggle." It is interesting to compare this statement with that occurring in the cable news from London, January 24:—"The German Government, recognising the great success of technical education in securing Germany's commercial supremacy in the world, has inserted in the Constitution Bill a provision for scientific education, which is to be free and accessible to all Germans according to their capacities." No intelligent man can quarrel with the Register's proposition. The economic waste caused by the present educational system, which apparently assumes that the majority of the rising generation will become clerks and shop assistants, is immense; while indirectly the ultimate result cannot but be a detrimental influence upon the health, happiness, and morale of the people. That is fairly obvious. But the point is this—"Is technical efficiency to be paramount in our educational training, and are our educational ideals to be on the same level as those of Germany?" It has been said that the aim of education should be to train, not so much in how to make a living, as in how to live. It ought to do both. "How to live." Does not this imply sense of duty and responsibility, honour, civility? As the Register says, technical education is a matter of vital importance; but are not these things also of vital importance, and are they not susceptible of great development with training? If in our educational system technical training has its part, yet at the same time the development of true character be supreme the beneficent power of the British Empire may well be increased to an extent not dreamed of in the past.

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