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EDUCATIONAL METHODS.

MR. MCCOY'S ENQUIRIES.
VALUABLE INFORMATION GAINED.

LONDON, September 18.

Mr. W. T. McCoy, the Director of Education in South Australia, has returned to London. In an interview with the Australian Press Association he said:— "I visited schools in Switzerland, Holland, Denmark, and Sweden. I was greatly impressed by what I saw in Denmark and Sweden, and especially with the attention paid to the medical and dental inspection and treatment of school children. I enquired extensively into the question of agricultural education in these countries. I visited many schools and colleges, including several of the peoples' high schools in Denmark and Sweden. I also specially visited the Gothenburg Exhibition to study a very fine exhibit showing the various phases of educational work in Sweden."

The people of these northern countries, he said, firmly believe in the advantages of education, and spend large sums of



Mr. W. T. McCoy.

money, especially upon buildings and equipment, to perfect their system.

He attributes their prosperity to wise legislation and co-operation, both of which are the result of education.

Mr. McCoy sails for Canada on September 23, and he will spend all his available time in the rural schools of Ontario, where, he understands, special provision is made for meeting the educational needs of the children in the outback settlements.

Character Before Culture.

Bishop Welldon, a former headmaster of Harrow, speaking at the British Association meeting, made a sharp attack upon the teaching profession. He complained that the State was not getting the value of its money. Teachers had refused to share in the national financial burden after the war, and some had actually gone on strike against a reduction of their salaries, to the great injury of the pupils. The elementary teaching profession should not be a trade union. The time had come when the system of education inaugurated in 1871 might well be reviewed and brought into conformity with the aspiration of the people, who knew that character was a more valuable element than culture in the life of the Empire and the British.

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CRIME AND PUNISHMENT.

By his lectures on "Crime and Punishment," rendered opportune by Mr. Edwards' motion in the House of Assembly favoring the introduction of a system of prison reform, Professor Coleman Phillipson has placed the community under a deep obligation, for there is no subject on which the public interest is more in need of quickening than the treatment of criminality with a view to its prevention and cure. The professor has shown how during the past few decades the whole conception of punishment has changed. But he also has shown that it has not changed nearly enough to bring it into consonance with the intelligence and feeling of all right-thinking men and women. Formerly punishment was primarily vindictive; that is to say, a means by which society avenged itself on one who had broken its laws. The retributive element, it will be remembered by students of Fitzjames Stephen's writings, plays a large part in his theories about crime and punishment; and it does so for the reason pointed out in his biography by his brother, Leslie Stephen, that he held with Bishop Butler that a desire for revenge was a natural and legitimate instinct and the way by which the "moral element" of punishment is expressed, since to reduce the motive of punishment to one of mere deterrence was to suppose man to be, like a beast of the field, a "mere bag of appetites." The criminal law, rightly interpreted, he held to be an emphatic assertion of the principle that "hatred and a desire for vengeance" are important elements in human nature, and that it was the duty of the law courts to secure their gratification in a regular and legal manner.

This view was at one period in the history of the criminal law very widely prevalent, and if by the majority of thoughtful minds it has been outgrown, it is not due so much to the spread of humanitarianism as to a recognition of the imperfections of human knowledge and of the inability of human justice to appraise the extent and depth of moral obliquity in anyone. Psycho-analysis may some day provide the materials by which this problem may be solved; but meanwhile penologists are content to restrict themselves in the administration of punishment to the twofold objects of reforming the culprit and deterring others from following his example. The idea of retribution pure and simple—"an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth"—except in uncultivated minds, scarcely survives at all; and for a good reason, that all the thought a rational mind can spare for the subject is needed to cope with the difficulties arising from the attempt to reconcile with each other the two other objects of punishment. Deterrence is needed, yet the penalty must not be so severe as merely to brutalise. A convict, as Professor Phillipson rightly says, must be able, if the ends of reformation are to be answered, to retain his self-respect, and this feeling is incompatible with blank despair and hopelessness, and the degradation associated with "such arbitrary and cruel forms of punishment as flogging, irons, solitary confinement," and semi-starvation. By such penalties there is danger of blunting what may remain of the finer feelings on which the reformer will hope to build, and which it is the avowed

aim of the indeterminate sentence to develop. Perhaps the difficulty of reconciling the deterrent and reformatory aspects of punishment is not as formidable as some may suppose, the deterrent effect being achieved by the mere loss of liberty unaccompanied by other disabilities or pains. A prison need not be a grim place of bolts and bars in order to inspire in the evilly disposed a desire to keep out of it. Nor is prison life robbed of its terrors when the "prison crop" is done away with, together with the broad arrow, the plank bed replaced by a decent mattress, and a proper window at the ordinary level substituted for a barred hole near the ceiling.

Even where these and other mitigations have been adopted prison life has never been so pleasant as to induce a wish to continue it or an anxiety to return to it. Attempts to escape are not confined to long-sentence prisoners, and the fact that among the long-sentence men they have been known to occur when the term had been all but served, shows the terrors which even a brief prolongation of the loss of liberty may have for those who have endured its tortures. No time or energy, therefore, need be wasted on fears of making prison life too attractive, when the really serious problem of rendering the gaol a place for repentance and moral recuperation offers quite enough food for thought, and its solution would be fraught with inestimable blessings for the community. The desire for liberty is one of the most wholesome passions in human nature, and it would be fatal to all hopes of prison reform if it did not exist. As it is, as Professor Phillipson observes, the promise of discharges and remissions of sentences is one of the most valuable weapons in the armory of the prison authorities for securing good conduct. And, further, as he rightly maintains, it acts as a spur to self-respect, for the convict who knows that the period of his release is largely dependent on himself, and that he is master of his fate and captain of his soul, must realise that he can have no grievance against anyone. He will learn the lesson all the sooner when he is allowed to exercise his hands and mind in a rational way, and to acquire that vocational training the possessors of which so rarely trouble judges and warders. The prison discipline will then have proved a salutary if bitter medicine, as in fact it has done in many cases when exercised wisely with this object in view. Professor Phillipson would deserve congratulation on his efforts in the cause of prison reform had he done no more than insist, as he does very emphatically, on the importance of the faculty of self-control and of making its development in the wrongdoer the primary objective in his treatment.

Mr. Anthony supported the Bill. He said any assistance the Government could give the University would be repaid well by reason of the scientific research that would be undertaken. By making higher education too cheap there was a grave danger of creating an "intellectual proletariat." In Melbourne and Sydney there were 1,100 students in the medical school. What was going to become of them? It was unwise to overcrowd the learned professions, and the State would be well advised to pay chief attention to technical and agricultural education.

Mr. Hudd also supported the Bill, which would have been unnecessary had it not been for the munificent bequest of the late Mr. Peter Waite. Even with the magnificent sum of £200,000, Government aid was necessary to give full effect to the object of the bequest, namely, the increased productivity of the soil of South Australia. With the assistance of the additional grant the Waite agricultural research scheme would be a great success, and place South Australia in the foremost position in the Commonwealth in that regard. One result of the increased grant, following the gift of the late Mr. Waite would be to encourage other public-spirited citizens to follow his example.

The second reading was agreed to and the Bill passed through Committee without amendment.

Herald
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HIGHER EDUCATION CONCESSIONS FOR UNIVERSITY

BIGGER GRANT AND TAXATION EXEMPTION.

The adjourned debate on the University Act Amendment Bill was resumed by Mr. L. L. Hill, who regretted that the institution had had in the past to rely so largely on private endowment. The Bill provided for an increase in the annual grant and to exempt the University from land tax. He supported the Bill, but regretted that the measure was necessary. A more vigorous policy of Government grants in the interest of higher education should be made. He was in total agreement with the Bill. He would be the first that would come forward and vote for any measure that would enable the University to obtain the three new chairs desired by them.

Mr. E. A. Anthony said that some body had said that education was a thing that had neither beginning nor end nor middle, and he agreed with that. It was quite refreshing to have such a debate as this, which was quite above party politics, during the session. He and his colleague (Mr. Hill) upon the University Council did not agree on all counts. It could be readily understood that any assistance rendered to the University was a good financial investment, in view of the great saving rendered the State by successful experiments tried by the professors and others in the laboratories at the University. There was a danger of an educational proletariat being established. In Sydney, he believed, there were 800 or a thousand young men going through the medical course there. There were no avenues for these trained men, and he thought they should guard against that in this State.

Mr. H. S. Hudd, who also was representative of the Parliament upon the University Council, thanked the Government for bringing in such a measure. There was a general feeling of thankfulness among the members of the council for the generosity of the Government in the past and the further exhibition of generosity in introducing the measure.

The Bill passed the second reading and committee stage (without amendment), and the third reading made order of the day for Tuesday.

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AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH.

INCREASED GRANT FOR THE UNIVERSITY.

THE BILL PASSED.

Mr. Hill, in the Assembly on Thursday, resumed the debate on the second reading of a Bill to amend the Adelaide University Act, by increasing the limit of the Government grant from £10,000 to £200,000 and exempting the University from payment of Land Tax. He supported the measure, which, he said, should have been introduced last session. However, the Government had done the right thing. He regretted that the Universities had to depend largely upon private endowments. He believed University education should be extended to all sections of the community, and the cost of higher education minimised. Higher education should be made more accessible to the people of the State. A more vigorous policy of Government grants to the University should be launched. The University Council should not have had to go to the Government. The Government should have gone to the council and offered to help them. He entirely agreed with the Bill. The reason why additional chairs were not being created was the cost. It was desired to establish professorships in economics, modern languages and forestry. He would support an increased grant at any time to achieve that object.