

The banana is more than a luxury; it is an invaluable article of diet, and in many of the Pacific islands in which it is grown it forms the staple food. Dried when unripe, it lends itself to the manufacture of an appetising and nutritious flour. When some thirty years ago bunchy top laid waste the Fijian plantations the natives were reduced to great straits for food, and were dependent on external generosity for their preservation from famine. Their disastrous experience should have been remembered by the authorities in Queensland when, ten years ago, the same disease found an entrance in that State. But what happened? Only what, as Professor Goddard reminds us, seems to happen everywhere in like circumstances. Thanks to the ingrained lethargy of the community, it has become the habit to treat the incipient stages of ills affecting the agricultural industry carelessly, awaiting the day when they may assume the status of devastating epidemics. When this stage is reached there is a rude awakening, but unfortunately the loss is not repaired. But public vigilance is only of value as a spur to right action, which consists in placing at the service of industry the entire resources of science. Though much has been done to bring them together in all countries, it is Professor Goddard's complaint that in Australia they are still kept too far apart. The Federal Government have been good enough to consecrate their union by the Act of 1920 extending the functions of the Institute of Science and Industry and equipping it with an efficient administration; but the efficacy of these measures has largely been neutralised by the inadequacy of the grant. The prosperity of the Commonwealth is now seen to depend so much on the encouragement of scientific research that even at a time when economy in the administration of the public finances in all possible directions is indispensable we are driven by sheer necessity to recognise the claims of research to a more liberal treatment. Too long has science been left sitting in the ashes, like Cinderella, and the punishment has come in the way described by Professor Goddard, viz., in the stupendous destruction wrought in a dozen fields of agricultural and horticultural effort. Long and painful experience has shown that when scientific research is excluded from those fields its place is taken by devastating evils infinitely more costly. Had the voice of science been heeded in time the terrible fruit fly (*dacus tryoni*) would not have overrun the orchards in many parts of Queensland and New South Wales. As it is the enemy has taken such a hold that it is only by the slow process of sapping and mining that it can be dislodged. If it is urged that science is an expensive weapon to employ in the conflict with the natural enemies of the primary producer, the answer must be that there is no other.

however, peace was made with France in 1815, British statesmen stood for a policy of wise generosity; it was not in Britain's interests that France should be unduly weakened. Similarly Britain had often been opposed to Russia in the 19th century, as the policy of that Empire was thought to be dangerous to British interests and to the balance of power. Britain welcomed the rise of United Italy and United Germany, because it was believed that those new States would help to preserve the balance of power as against France and Russia. Relations with Germany were fairly good in the time of Bismarck, who was careful to isolate France, and to avoid any policy that would be likely to lead to a general coalition against Germany. The dismissal of Bismarck in 1890 led to great changes in German policy. Germany developed naval and colonial ambitions, which aroused the apprehension of England, and her aggressive policy in the Near East antagonised Russia. The bungling diplomacy of Germany lost her the friendship of Italy, and led ultimately to the formation of the Triple Entente. The object of Britain's adhesion to the Triple Entente was to maintain the balance of power, which was threatened by the warlike policy of Germany. That was the real motive of British participation in the Great War. A German victory would have established a domination in Europe as intolerable to Britain as the Empire of Napoleon had once been.

A great mistake had been made, not in entering the war, but in failing to keep the objects of the war consistently before the people in the making of the peace. It was necessary and desirable to reduce the power of Germany, and to put right the wrongs she had done. It was not in British interests that Germany should be made impotent, or a French domination of the Continent substituted for German domination. Anti-German sentimentalism was just as foolish as pro-German sentimentalism. The conditions created by the Peace of Versailles involved a deplorable upsetting of the balance of power in Europe, and were also thoroughly artificial. The relative positions of France and Germany in the politics of Europe to-day did not correspond with the real facts of the situation. Under M. Poincare France had carried on the war under conditions of nominal peace. France had reverted to her traditional policy of maintaining a divided and distracted Germany. There could never be any real security for France so long as Frenchmen refused to rear children. A reversal of the present tendency of the birth rate would do more for the security of France than any indemnities, annexations, and occupations. The balance of power had been further deranged by the temporary paralysis of Russia and the break-up of Austria-Hungary. The revival of Italy under Signor Mussolini was, however, a hopeful feature of the situation. Italy was the natural Ally of Britain in resisting any attempt to bring Europe under the entire control of France.

The fundamental principles of a sound British foreign policy were:—(1) They must aim at a restoration of the balance of power, which meant a revision of the present situation in Europe. The League of Nations could not effectually function so long as any one Power was in a position of unchallengeable domination; (2) This policy demanded that Germany should not be reduced to perpetual economic and political servitude; an impotent Germany was just as undesirable from their point of view as a dominant Germany; (3) Russia must be restored to the comity of nations; this would help to promote that trade revival which Britain needed, and also help to adjust the balance of power; (4) Germany and Russia must be admitted to the League of Nations, and everything done to secure the adhesion of America. The League was the natural instrument for securing the restoration of the balance of power, the revision of the Versailles Treaty, and the settlement of territorial and reparations questions. Through the League they must work for a real disarmament. At the present time the military and, above all, the aerial predominance of France, constituted a danger that no patriotic Britisher could overlook. Principal Kiek said he was hopeful of a change in French policy as a result of the downfall of M. Poincare. The danger of national bankruptcy, the disappointing results of the Ruhr occupation, the total failure of the subsidised separatist movements in the Rhineland and Bavaria, and above all, the fear of isolation had combined to bring about the downfall of M. Poincare. At an opportune moment the Dawes report brought them for the first time within sight of a rational solution of the eternal reparations question. He hoped both France and Germany would accept it, as Britain and Italy would certainly do. He hoped, too, that the present negotiations with Russia would terminate satisfactorily. The most disquieting feature of the situation was the growth of nationalism and communism in Germany. Both those movements were the natural outcome of misery and despair. Britain depended for her security and prosperity on a Europe where all the people enjoyed freedom and well-being, in which no people was either dominant or enslaved. The foreign policy of the British Government at the present time ought to be energetically supported by all British citizens, irrespective of party. That policy would certainly be endorsed by the verdict of history.

## THE EDUCATION PROBLEM.

### W.E.A. Want Increased Subsidy.

### Government Proposals Outlined.

Replying to a deputation from the Workers' Educational Association on Thursday afternoon, the Minister of Education (Mr. Hill) referred to proposed work in connection with the education system of the State. He claimed that the education question had been neglected by past Governments.

The request of the deputation was that an increased subsidy should be granted to the Workers' Educational Association by the Government. Mr. Whitford, M.P., in introducing the speakers, said the activities of the W.E.A. were to an extent retarded by lack of funds. They had approached previous Governments. In 1923 they were successful in obtaining an extra £200, and they hoped that the present Government would provide the necessary sum to carry out a programme drawn up by the association.

**"A Grip on the Community."**  
The President (Mr. E. Cheary) said that if they were to extend their activities they would require a larger grant. In support of the claim that the work of the association had a grip on the community, it might be stated that 400 new students had lately been enrolled.

**Young People Interested.**  
The general secretary (Mr. G. McRitchie) stated that latterly a number of young people had joined the classes. There was room for two full-time tutors on the Murray Settlements, and in other country areas people had evinced enthusiasm in the work, and were asking for assistance. The association's request was for an increased grant of £2,500, of which £2,000 would be devoted to operations in the country and £500 would be used for extension of the classes in Adelaide. Mr. Ritchie added that there was an awakening in education.

**Good Staff of Teachers.**  
Professor Darnley Naylor (Chairman of the joint committee) said that in no other State probably was there a better staff of teachers in a similar movement than those in South Australia. He thought it would be a good service to the community if better opportunities were afforded young people to join the classes rather than that they should be allowed to stand in the streets learning the latest betting odds.

**Task of the Tutors.**  
The Acting Director (Mr. A. L. G. McKay) said that special attention had to be given to the question of selecting the right type of tutor, and some difficulty was found in that direction at times. When they secured the best men it was not fair that they should overload them with students. He referred in detail to the proposed activities in the country districts.

**Numerous Education Requirements.**  
The Minister, in reply, said he wished to congratulate the speakers on the strong case they had made out. He assured them that his sympathy was with the splendid work of the association, and that he would not spare efforts to assist them and any other body that could advance education in the State. His lot, as head of that department, however, was not a very happy one at present. He had found that the education question had been neglected by past Governments. He said that advisedly, because he had made careful enquiries regarding the matter. The Labour Government was pledged to a vigorous policy of assisting and improving education. It could, however, go only so far as the finances would permit. The spirit was willing, but the capacity of the Treasury was limited. There were many education requirements in South Australia. Dealing with proposed expenditure over a period of three years, some of those requirements could be enumerated. A large number of additional schools, at an estimated cost of £150,000, were needed. New classrooms were also necessary to relieve overcrowding, and a further £150,000 was wanted to execute that work. Many of the schools called for remodelling, and that programme for one year would cost £20,000. To borrow money for education was a tax on posterity, and he thought that if they could get over the difficulty by remodelling old buildings, and erecting new schools and new classrooms by borrowing money, it would be a sensible course to follow.

**Teachers' College Required.**  
Concerning the medical side, more doctors were needed, added the Minister. At present there was only one lady doctor in the department. She was rendering splendid service. There were 83,000 children on the roll, and Dr. Halley had been able to examine only 4,000 of them. He

trusted that the Government would agree to engage more doctors for that essential work. It was also necessary that they should see that the children were properly examined from the dental aspect. Another important matter in primary education was the question of building teachers' college. At present there were 300 teachers "living in a hotel." The matter must be improved, and, although £28,000 was placed on the Estimates by the late Government for the erection of a building, it did not leave the money when it vacated office, and the present Government would have to provide it. He thought an increased subsidy to the association would be a deserving vote. It would give a great return to the State generally. He would place the deputation's request before Cabinet, and would also offer his sympathy and support in reference to the matter. The Government, of course, had to cut its garment according to its cloth. The money required would have to come out of revenue, which was raised only by taxation.

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## EUROPEAN AFFAIRS.

### LECTURE BY PRINCIPAL KIEK.

Under the auspices of the Workers' Educational Association a lecture was delivered at the North-terrace Institute on Wednesday evening by Principal Kiek, the subject being the present situation in European affairs. Mr. E. Cheary presided. Principal Kiek disputed the widespread notion that advocates of the League of Nations were a set of amiable sentimentalists. He said the League of Nations was a business organisation which had already produced great practical results. It was true the League rested on sentiment, and that was also true of every other human institution. The State, for example, rested on a sentiment of patriotism. There was a great deal of difference between a sentiment based on facts and a sentimentalism based on the ignoring or misapprehension of facts. The sentimentalism of nations often blinded individuals and nations to their own obvious interests. That vicious kind of sentimentalism was responsible for the weaknesses of the Peace of Versailles. He had a great quarrel with those British and Australian sentimentalists who were so led astray by the sentimentalism of hate as to be disloyal to the foreign policy of successive British Governments and disregardful of the demands of British interests. The lecturer sketched in outline the development of British foreign policy from the time of Wolsey in the early part of the 16th century. He sought to show that British foreign policy had always been controlled by the idea of the "balance of power." Britain always opposed any nation that sought to become predominant in Europe. For this reason she had fought Philip II., Louis XIV., Napoleon, and the Kaiser. From 1793 to 1814 France was a danger to Europe; a tremendous feeling was aroused by the exorbitant ambitions and ruthless methods of Napoleon. Who

"The Dalton Plan in Australia." By Frank Shann, M.A. Melbourne: Ramsay Publishing Company.  
Mr. Shann is the headmaster of the Trinity Grammar School at Kew (Victoria), where the Dalton Plan has proved a great success. Mr. George S. Browne, Vice-principal of the Teachers' Training College, and Senior Lecturer in the School of Education at Melbourne University, in a foreword to this book remarks that the underlying principle is that in a group of 40 boys no two will have the same intellectual equipment, the same special likings and weaknesses, the same rates of work and methods of attack, the same types of imagination, and the same degrees of concentration. The Dalton Plan caters for the special abilities of each individual, maps out for him his own path, and tells him exactly what progress he is making. Only a good school can handle the plan, which demands strong discipline with hard work by teachers and pupils. Discipline is interpreted as co-operation between all concerned to give pleasant and effective conditions of work. Pleasant class rooms become veritable live laboratories. Even the slacker is made of iron and tries to catch up. "The Superman boy," says Mr. Browne, "is noted for his initiative and keenness—under a system like this there seems no limit to what he might achieve." The plan takes its name from the Public High School of Dalton, Massachusetts, where Miss Helen Parkhurst first put it into execution, and it was tried some years ago with good results in England. Mr. Shann gives a clear account of his experiences with the plan, and points out both its advantages and its difficulties. "School life under the old plan," he declares, "is an eternal contest between masters and boys." Under the Dalton plan each boy is allowed to work at his own pace in his own way. "The bright boy is no longer held back by the slower members of his form, whilst they in turn are not bewildered by a pace which they cannot maintain." The plan is now in operation in over 2,000 schools in England, and it is attracting the attention of educationists all over the world.