

THE EDUCATION SOCIETY CONFERENCE.

Privileges of Citizenship.

The Church and the Home.

Mr. W. J. Adey says the great changes that have taken place in the social, commercial, industrial, and political life render a corresponding educational movement imperative. Miss Miethke is impressed by the value of girls' clubs.

The annual Conference of the Education Society was resumed at the Institute Building on Saturday morning, when the object of "The preparation of boys and girls for citizenship" was discussed. Miss D. Gillam, who presided, said previous speakers at the Conference had provided themselves worthy of the great cause of education. The highest ideals of citizenship had been set forth. She alluded to the fact that a girl who had been successful in a beauty competition had received civic honor, and she thought at least that they could teach the children that there were finer ends to achieve than that. (Applause).

Service and Co-operation.

Mr. W. J. Adey said he had been allotted one aspect of the question upon which to speak, namely, the training of youths, so that they might justly value the rights, duties, and privileges which they were to enjoy as citizens of the Commonwealth. Citizenship, in the ideal state, involved loyal, devoted, and unselfish co-operation. The gateways, therefore, by which they might enter into the larger citizenship were service and co-operation, and it was the training in these directions which was the teachers' special care. Every organization in the land which had anything to do with the youth be it home, church, club, workshop, office, contributed to this training, and such institutions could not evade the responsibilities cast upon them, but it was the influence of the school which was the particular consideration for the Conference. (Applause.)

The Laws of Science.

There were cogent reasons why the subject of citizenship should receive special consideration. One had only to consider the changes which had taken place in social, commercial, industrial, and political life to realize that there must be some corresponding educational movement keeping step with the general march of events. The application of the laws of science which had resulted in the great inventions of the last hundred years had revolutionized industries and means of transport. The forces of nature were now utilized on such a vast scale that in the space of one life the face of the earth had been changed. With the introduction of steam, machinery, electricity, and all that had followed in their train, the whole physical and political world had been altered with startling rapidity. He could remember the rendering down of fat, the making of wicks, and the dipping of candles; to-day they pressed a button and the whole room was flooded with light. Half a century ago a child of the working class received a working class education, which consisted in doing the work that his father and grandfather and great-grandfather had done before him, with the very slightest acquaintance in some cases, with the three R's. The sons of the nobility and of the wealthier classes were educated at the great public schools and universities. They were trained as a governing class. Every boy who attended them looked forward to the day when he should take his place in Parliament or in such local institutions as demanded his service in accordance with the traditions of his family. How well they did their work was to be seen in the rise of the British Empire. (Applause.) The education, however, of the working classes in these days imparted to the youth something of the community spirit. They were trained to be industrious, to be orderly, to share responsibility, to produce something for the common good. More than that, their training brought them into contact with nature at first-hand, with real things, and with an accurate knowledge of the necessities of their communities. To be a farmer in these days a lad need know something of many trades, which had now been specialized, and the needs provided by machinery and mass production. In all this kind of training there was constructive imagination, ingenuity, and a sense of the real. All that had gone, and the concentration of industry, the invention of machinery, and the division of labor had practically robbed many of the industrial occupations of their educational significance, and to meet this a radical change was necessary in our education systems. (Applause.)

Freedom and Government.

Side by side with the revolutionary forces which had been at work in the industrial revolution had taken place in the political freedom and government of the people. The responsibility of government had been placed upon the shoulders of the law and

placed upon the many. It was no longer true that a man must be a shoemaker because his father and grandfather made boots and shoes. It was frequently demonstrated in these modern times that the sons of humble homes might rise to occupy with credit to themselves and to their country the highest positions in the land. The freedom and power granted in this great democracy put within the reach of every boy the means of developing himself. They enjoyed great blessings, but there was always the danger from within of the ignorant, the selfish, and the unpatriotic. The natural reaction from what he had said was how far the changes mentioned, the greater freedom of citizenship, the responsibilities of government, and the necessity for service and co-operation so necessary in modern democracy, were met by the advances made in school training. Family life, home life, church life, in fact all the associations which were formed in modern society must grow with the times. Educationists recognized the changed conditions and were struggling to meet the new demands. "New education," about which so much had been written, was nothing if it was not an effort to conform to the general tendency and onward march of civilization, but in spite of the additions of such things as workshops, where manual arts were taught, of nature study, of cooking classes, the fringe only had not been touched. The education and the discipline of the home life before the rise of the factory system and modern machinery and mass production was now lacking. The child had been taken charge of by the State, which insisted upon his attendance at school and also made demands upon his time in the home with much useless work known as "home work." The school then must provide something to take the place of this responsibility and necessity to do some work in the world if the child was to be trained in service and co-operation. The work of the school towards this aim should be both direct and indirect. Children might be taught in a practical way to be useful and of service. Loyalty, unselfishness, and the spirit of brotherhood might be developed. A proper understanding of the workings and origin of the institutions under which they lived should be studied. Every subject taught in the school might be used to develop a larger citizenship. (Applause.)

Personal Responsibility.

Apart altogether from direct instruction bearing upon civics, which should form a portion of the curriculum of all schools, something in the nature of occupations which demanded personal responsibility and brought the child into direct contact with physical realities must be introduced. Already a great change had come in the relations existing between the teacher and the pupil. The type of discipline was no longer discipline by force (meaning physical). That had disappeared from the schools, except in extreme cases, and teachers were not now looked upon with that dread and fear which repressed all the natural impulses of the child. The day of the "tally-wag" was over, and it was a frequent thing to find the children so fond of their school and their teachers that even the parents found difficulty in persuading Johnny that he was not well enough to go to school. Nature study, elementary science, gardening, woodwork and cookery were evidences of the transformation that was going on within the school. The play-side of school life was an important factor in developing the community spirit. The boys were being taught to conduct their own affairs under the guiding hand of the sportsmaster whose unselfish labors in school hours and out of school hours were a very potent factor in citizenship training. (Applause.) The lads held their meetings, elected their leaders, and by mutual cooperation prepared their own grounds. The spirit of emulation was encouraged, and, above all, they were learning to play for the side, for the honor of the school and not for self. There was perhaps a stronger agency for cultivating the subordination of self for the good of all than that provided by properly-organized team games. What more could be done? In many respects, the dead hand of the past held them. The grammar school type of education had still a strong influence, and external examinations often exercised a paralyzing effect upon the freedom of the teacher and pupil. Mains must be trained to be self-supporting before marriage, or qualified to maintain themselves in industry, commerce, or

so frequently thereby banished from the school. They were all endeavoring to prepare their pupils to take their places as citizens and members of society in surroundings almost entirely divorced from the social spirit. A visit to any school in this city would demonstrate what he meant.

The Ideal School.

In the final report of the departmental committee of the Board of Education in the old country, published just prior to the introduction of Mr. Fisher's Bill, was the following statement—"We consider that our secondary education has been too exclusively concerned with the cultivation of the mind by means of books, and the instruction of the teacher. To this essential aim there must be added as a condition of balance and completeness that of fostering those qualities of mind and that skill of hand which are evoked by systematic work." They were on the way towards this reformation. In addition to the hand-work referred to, science laboratories were provided in all the High Schools, and in the country High Schools workshops were being built. Much had been done in recent years to improve school buildings, but he ventured to predict that the present school would be as little like the modern school in 25 years' time as the schools of 25 years ago, compared with those they were building to-day. Only a portion of the building would be erected to stand through the years—the remainder would be so built that remodelling would be less costly. Workshops, laboratories, and libraries would be erected in all schools. Most of the classrooms would be provided with movable furniture, and there would be developed a freedom and interchange of thought, a spirit of co-operation and service, an atmosphere in keeping with the larger society into which the pupils were soon to be promoted. Assembly halls would be looked upon as a necessity for all large schools, and combined rooms would be erected in the smaller ones for use in what may be termed inspirational gatherings. A swimming bath and a gymnasium would not be wanting, and the playground should be ample for the proper organization of all team games.

The Church and the Home.

There were two agencies other than the school, and yet working towards the same end. They were the church and the home. He believed that no nation would ever be truly great that was not permeated with the truths and spirit of the teachings of the Great Master, as Burns said of his native country when describing the scene of family worship that it was "From scenes like these old Scotia's grandeur springs." The magnitude of the task set before him, and the time limit, prevented more than a passing notice of the many issues involved, but the practical problem for them as teachers was to take hold of all these factors which would make for a school atmosphere more in keeping with the larger society outside, that it might connect with it in as many points as possible, so that the school might be a microcosm developing through its many activities that spirit of co-operation and service which should foster, protect, and extend all the benefits and privileges they as a democratic people enjoyed. It was only thus that they could hope for the stability and the progress of the nation. In the words of Professor Dewey—"When the school produces and trains each child of society into membership within such a little community, saturating him with the spirit of service, and providing him with the instruments of effective self-direction, we shall have the deepest and best guarantee of a larger society, which is worthy, lovely, and harmonious." (Applause.)

Citizenship of Women.

Miss A. Miethke said the modernising of girls' education was of comparatively recent development. Citizenship in its highest form implied membership in an organized society, which, while it conferred privilege and protection, inspired and demanded reciprocal service. Such organization made possible the full development of inherent power, and seemed to impose a moral obligation. The most desirable expression of citizenship for women was in the full functioning of her capacity as a home-maker. In the fulfilment of this capacity, which was peculiarly hers, lay the welfare and happiness of the whole organization in which she had citizen membership. The work of the true home-builder was far from being utilitarian. Her education must be wider and fuller than ever before, but included in that fulness must be the study of those specific arts and crafts whose successful performance so largely dominated the health and happiness of the home. The last 15 years or so had seen a tremendous change in opinion regarding education for girls. For ages the girl had been left to the limitations of the maternal instinct, and the old dame school. Miss Miethke described the system in various countries, where the education of girls was now equally important as that of boys. Specially educated women were probably a first line of a nation's defence. The education of girls presented a greater problem than that of boys, the nature of whose higher education was determined by whatever walk of life they were elected to follow. Not only must girls be trained as home-makers, and cover the wide field of arts and sciences, but they must be trained to be self-supporting before marriage, or qualified to maintain themselves in industry, commerce, or

or a profession in the event of non-marriage or widowhood. (Applause.)

Right Use of Leisure.

The solution seemed to be that of a general, cultural course with additional vocational courses, followed, where the vocation of study permitted, by further subjects determined by the student herself according to bent or ability. English literature, history, art, and sports should have a prominent part. Upon the right use of leisure depended a large share of the happiness and moral balance of life. The educational must not omit chemistry for the determination of food values, dietetics, food combinations, and preparation, marketing, and costs, besides general housewifery, household management, with its problems of income and expenditure, care of infants, home needlework, and first aid, &c. As the girl left school and cut adrift from the school anchor and the spirit of companionship and community sense, it was good to provide her with new friendships and sound healthy companions. (Applause.)

Value of Girls' Clubs.

Girls' clubs were valuable in the further education of the young woman citizen. Not only was such a club a healthy outlet for physical and psychic forces, but it had a definite part in the scheme of the girl's education. It mattered not what club she selected so long as it provided physical, mental, and spiritual stimulus. The Girl Guide movement, interpreted at its best would further provide for the development of leadership. Well might the community avail itself of the young girl enthusiasm and idealism inspired by clubs or kindred organizations. Unfortunately the comparatively recent admission of women to secondary education and the university class had laid stress on the purely academic course. Girls were so anxious to prove their brain capacity that they were striving for common subjects with boys, with no further goal than the examination standard. In some of the English and Scottish universities, London, Sheffield, and Edinburgh for instance, the Bachelor of Household Science degree gave a dignity and status to studies connected with woman's natural career, and would influence the studies of girls to definite purpose and completion. Until such branches were fostered by the highest educational institutions they would always be lightly regarded as the resources of the mentally inferior. (Applause.)

POLITICS AND CITIZENSHIP.

THE GROWTH OF RIGHTS.

Professor J. McKellar Stewart presided over the evening session, when Mr. Duncan Hughes, M.H.R., spoke on "Politics and Citizenship." He said the political rights in Australia had grown more rapidly than education, in spite of the great educational strides. Certainly, as far as electoral rights were concerned, it was hardly possible to go much farther. It was the duty of the legislator to consider the present, but also, as far as he could, to learn something from the lessons of the past. There was a reluctance on the part of people to perform the duties of citizenship, despite the fact that they enjoyed greater privileges than at any former period in the world's history. They took these things all too much for granted. He did not regard compulsory voting as being in that category. He opposed the Bill which introduced it, because he thought it a bad principle to make a man carry out a public duty in which he was not interested.

Snobbery in the Schools.

Mr. Hughes spoke of the extraordinary lack of interest in political meetings, and said if candidates were not sufficiently attractive others should be found. There was also a disinclination to accept positions of authority and responsibility. There was certainly a tendency, among young Australians in particular, to fail to take up responsibility which meant the exercise of authority over those who had formerly been their mates. That was hardly to be expected after the initiative and ability the average Australian displayed during the war. There was also an inclination in some of the public schools in Australia to display something approaching snobbery, and that was to be deplored. The conclusion one must come to was that Australia, unfortunately, had not yet developed collectively the traditions of public life which had so long been a feature of Great Britain. He referred to the growth of extra political bodies, which tended to the weakening of the position of Parliament. He also feared that sufficient attention was not paid in Australia to foreign affairs. They must look out on the world at large. (Applause.)

Women in Public Life.

He was not pessimistic in spite of the drawbacks he had mentioned. There were, in fact, grounds for hope. The great development of the State school system was encouraging. Another hope was the rise of the interest of women in public affairs. Women had shown a capacity and capability for public affairs which in his degenerate days he had not imagined they possessed. As far as education was concerned he could not countenance anything that would not recognize religion. The Bible was the finest literature in the world, and a knowledge of it was essential for every educated man. (Applause.) More might be taught boys of political economy and commercial life. He would not say that members of Parliament should not be paid, but it caused people to say that they were in politics for what they