

Adv. 17-12-28

The Advertiser

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SPEECH DAYS AND EXAMINATIONS.

We are now in the thick of that most interesting period of the academic year when the masters and mistresses of colleges and high schools are giving an account of their stewardship, and youth listens respectfully, if not necessarily with rapture, to those exhortations from more or less distinguished visitors to future right conduct and effort without which no breaking-up is considered complete or even possible. There is always something impressive in such gatherings, as there is in those demonstrations with which in the outside world, it is customary to mark the close of the calendar year. Many who attend them are taking their final leave of school life and are on the eve of embarking on those responsibilities for the discharge of which their labors hitherto have been a preparation. We all remember from our well-thumbed "Tom Brown's Schooldays," Old Brooke's parting speech at Rugby. It is the speech of "a fellow who is just going to leave, and who has spent a good slice of his life here. Eight years it is, and eight such years as I never hope to have again." Old Brooke would have had them if he could, and failing an ability to live his life again would have transferred to the boys he left behind him the conclusions he had drawn from his own experience. But how many adults would, if they could, on speech days or any other days, implant in youthful minds the lessons they have themselves drawn from life's battle! As well indulge Robert Louis Stevenson's fanciful wish that he could transfer his birthdays to juvenile friends who might find more use for them than he could himself.

Speech days are the outcome of the prize-giving system, and are a reminder that this system, like that of examinations, is "under a heavy trial," as, in much-quoted words, the Prince Consort once said of Parliamentary government. A correspondent of the London "Times" Educational Supplement quotes theorists as arguing as a reason against prize-giving that it exalts into a means what should be an end; that it "produces the pot-hunter and mark-getter;" that it destroys the high mission of education which is to inculcate a passion for knowledge for its own sake, and takes from the successful pupil what should be his true incentive, "a consciousness of duty well done." These are antiquated objections, and have again and again been met by the argument that in a philosophic mould, that the reflective power is a matter of slow growth, and that true as may be the saying of Lord Chesterfield that "learning and virtue, like gold, have intrinsic value," a mind may be too young to grasp its significance, whereas the prospect of material reward is within the comprehension of the most immature. A more serious objection is not to prizes, but to the examinations by which desert is tested. The latter, we are told, can "never be regarded as exact tests, and a prize therefore is always awarded with some injustice." Some theorists maintain that at best examinations are poor tests of mental power; that they make less call on the intelligence than on the memory; and that what is learned by rote is useless and lasts only as long as the mechanical memory lasts. This line of thought finds strong support among the advocates of the Dalton system, which is

based on the theory that a child can learn only through its natural interests. When children are herded together in classes and forced to memorise and repeat what is dictated to them by the teacher, it is not actual knowledge that is tested, say objectors to the conventional methods, but the strength of a memory trained under the influence of a fear of failure. But even the Dalton system (which is in partial operation in the Thebarton High School), though it allows the student to follow the bent of his own interest and encourages him to find out things and solve difficulties for himself, and though it gets rid of cramming or reduces the danger of it, does not solve the examination problem. Tests of knowledge are necessary in whatever way a taste for the Pierian waters may be inculcated. The choice is between perfecting or improving the instrument and replacing it with another. It is manifest that in the last analysis an examination is less a test of knowledge of a subject than a test of particular questions relating to the subject which are asked. It may be the bad luck of the student who has cultivated nine-tenths of the field to be examined almost exclusively as to the one-tenth he has overlooked; and on the other hand he may have had the good luck to be examined with regard to the little he really knew, and to escape the ordeal of having to disclose his ignorance with regard to the rest of the subject. Change in the system involves a difficulty which, as Mr. W. T. McCoy tells us in his report on his visit to the United States last year, has led the high schools in that country to dispense with external examinations altogether, and to substitute examinations by the school authorities. The commendation of the headmaster of a high school is a sufficient passport to the university, and the university contents itself with seeing that the teachers are qualified, and that the equipment and laboratories reach the proper standard. A high school would lose caste with a university if favoritism, or a mistaken judgment, or any other cause were responsible for having a student foisted on it whose abilities were not what they ought to be. School examinations there must be, but they are merely for the satisfaction of the teacher, and for safeguarding him against error in passing a student from class to class and eventually to the University. The teacher knows best the preparedness of the pupil for each advance, and it is not his interest to accelerate progress by cramming. One reason for the disuse or curtailment of public examinations in America is said to be that too much was made of a single examination as a means of ascertaining a pupil's progress, whereas in place of a single test a year, with its possibilities of accident, the quarterly or other periodical investigations which it is open to a school to conduct furnish as trustworthy a measure of fitness as could be conceived. The experience of America is valuable, because whatever is done in a matter of such importance must, to begin with, be experimental. Until the fruits of experience could be garnered it would always be possible to say that whatever the drawbacks of the public examinations, things would be much worse if there were no check upon the schools and the progress of children could be ascertained solely by the reports of the teachers. Yet in America not one or two states, but all the states, as we are told by Mr. McCoy, are content with examinations conducted by the school authorities, and the universities cheerfully accept students accredited by the secondary schools, with the stipulation that their teaching and equipment should not fall below a specified level. It is a great responsibility for the teacher, but not greater than is involved in the vocational guidance which he undertakes in America and parts of Great Britain, and is about to undertake in South Australia.

ADMISSIONS TO THE BAR.

SEVEN NEW MEMBERS SWORN IN.

Seating accommodation was at a premium in the Supreme Court on Saturday morning, when the Full Court assembled for the purpose of admitting seven new members to the Bar. The bench was occupied by the Chief Justice (Sir George Murray), Mr. Justice Angas Parsons, Mr. Justice Napier, Mr. Justice Richards, and Mr. Justice Piper. The candidates seeking admission were Messrs. Athol Bertram Johnston, Phillip Brendon Angas Parsons, John Neil McEwin, Walter Archibald Thornton, Jack Rodolph Cornish, Basil Beverley Harford, and Colin Roy Colquhoun.

In applying for the admissions of Mr. Angas Parsons, Mr. G. McEwin said he believed it was the first occasion in South Australia in which a son had applied to a bench of which his father was an occupant. In the unavoidable absence of Mr. P. E. Johnston, Mr. McEwin applied for the admission of Mr. J. N. McEwin, his son. Mr. Skipper applied for the admission of Mr. Thornton, Mr. J. S. Murray for Mr. Harford, Mr. Arnold Moulden for Mr. Johnston, Mr. H. W. Martin for Mr. Cornish, and Mr. G. A. Pavy for Mr. Colquhoun.

Mr. Johnston was admitted conditionally for 12 months on the condition that he resided and practised in South Australia. The seven applicants were sworn in as members of the legal profession by the Master of the Supreme Court (Mr. W. L. Stuart) and then signed the record.

Congratulations of the Bench.

The Chief Justice said on behalf of his learned brothers and himself he offered sincere congratulations and good wishes to the new members. The occasion was remarkable in two respects. In the first place they had in the person of Mr. Johnston a member of the legal profession of Tasmania, and he was the first who had applied to become a member of the profession in South Australia. He had difficulties in his way because reciprocity between the two courts had to be shown to be established. Mr. Johnston had succeeded in establishing reciprocity, and therefore the court was able to admit him. The effect of that would be that members of the legal profession in South Australia also would have the right to apply for admission in the Supreme Court in Tasmania. The occasion was also remarkable on account of the fact that there were among them sons of three old practitioners of that court, Mr. Philip Angas Parsons, a son of Mr. Justice Angas Parsons; Mr. McEwin, a son of Mr. G. McEwin; and Mr. Thornton, a son of the late Mr. E. A. Thornton. Sir George said he supposed he ought to say that the members of the bench hoped the three would follow in their father's footsteps, but there might be a difficulty in the case of Mr. Parsons in getting into his father's footsteps, as there were so many others trying to get there. (Laughter.) There were other footsteps, however, which led in the same direction—footsteps of his brother colleagues and himself. There they might not find the same difficulty, but the footsteps were very substantial. (Laughter.) At one time the bench used to deliver a great deal of advice to young practitioners, but they found after a while that they were repeating themselves at the end of every term, and seeing that there were three terms in the year the bench came to recognise that it was not desirable that it should be heard any more. For that reason he was not going to tell them what their duties in the profession were because he would only be saying what they already knew. In conclusions the Chief Justice expressed on behalf of himself and his colleagues the warmest felicitations to the newly-admitted applicants to the Bar, and the hope that they would have successful careers.

Careers of Applicants.

Mr. Johnson is a Tasmanian lawyer who was admitted to the Bar in the Island State in 1923. He is a native of Hobart, and was educated at the Friends' High School, and matriculated at the University of Tasmania. He served his articles with Messrs. Ewing, Hodgman, & Seager, of Hobart, and remained with the firm till 1924, from which date till 1926 he was a member of the firm of Elleston and Johnston, in Hobart. In the latter year he came to Adelaide, taking a position as managing clerk with Messrs. Moulden & Sons. He enlisted in 1918, and was in camp when the Armistice was signed.

Mr. Angas Parsons is 23 years of age, and is the elder son of Mr. Justice

Angas Parsons. Prior to entering the University of Adelaide, he was a student at St. Peter's College. In 1924 he went to England for a trip, and resumed his work at the University on his return. He began his articles early in 1924 with Mr. G. McEwin, of Adelaide. Mr. Parsons was a house prefect at St. Peter's College, and a member of a college debating society, of the University Sports Association, and of the Law Students' Debating Society for one year. Tennis and cricket are his favorite sports.

Mr. McEwin is the only son of Mr. George McEwin, solicitor, of Adelaide. He was educated at St. Peter's College, and later at the University of Adelaide. He was articled to Mr. P. E. Johnstone, of Messrs. Johnstone, Ols-son & Kriewaldt. Mr. McEwin is a member of the University Students' Building Committee. He plays golf and indulges in rowing.

Mr. Thornton received his education at the Glenelg Grammar School, after which he became articled to his father, Mr. E. A. Thornton. On the death of his father he was articled to Mr. P. E. Johnstone, and later to Mr. F. G. Scammell. Mr. Thornton is a believer in the doctrine of hard work, and his few leisure moments are spent in yachting.

Mr. Cornish is a son of Mr. C. P. Cornish, of the Education Department. He was educated at St. Peter's College and the University of Adelaide. He plays both tennis and lacrosse, and is a member of the Law Students' Society and the University Sports Association. He was articled to Mr. O. Hunter, of Messrs. Hunter, Boucaut, Martin, and Ashton.

Mr. Harford was educated at the Murray Bridge Public and Adelaide High Schools, and subsequently at the University of Adelaide. In 1913 he entered the office of Messrs. Symon, Browne, Symon, & Povey as clerk, and in 1923 was articled to Mr. C. J. P. Symon. His father, Mr. J. Harford, was a former headmaster of the Murray Bridge Public School.

Mr. Colquhoun is a son of Mr. J. Colquhoun, contractor, of Adelaide. He was educated at Flinders-street Public School, the Adelaide High School, and the University of Adelaide. He served in the Great War, winning the Military Cross. Mr. Colquhoun was a clerk in charge of the Master's Office at the Supreme Court, and Deputy Registrar of the High Court. At the end of 1925 he was articled to Mr. G. A. Pavy.

REG. 18-12-28

VICTORIA SQUARE.

Railings To Go.

At University's Expense.

After controversy extending over several years, the Adelaide City Council has accepted the recommendation of its markets and parks committee to remove the railings around Victoria square.

The offer to remove the railings was made by the Adelaide University, which will bear the cost.

It was decided, at a meeting of the council on Monday, that the matter of remodelling the square should be held over until experience had shown what was required in that respect.

Cr. Woods Opposes.

The matter was not agreed to without debate. When the recommendation came before a meeting of the council on Monday afternoon Cr. Woods moved that it should be referred back to committee for further consideration. The recommendation had not been brought forward in a clear way, and it was a double-barrelled motion. He opposed the fence coming down and also the manner of its disposal. Some might be in favour of the fence being removed, but not in the method of its disposal.

Cr. Lundie—We have no right to give away the City Council's assets.

Cr. Woods—I question if you will find half a dozen places in London without fences. As soon as the fence is taken away people will go here, there, and everywhere. Then, too, we will have the upkeep of the remodelling. Tenders should have been called for the removal. It should not be given away. Councilors are inconsistent, because they wish to take the fence away from one lawn and place it in front of another down on the bank of the Torrens.

Cr. Lundie seconded the motion, and said the council was giving away the assets of the ratepayers—in his opinion valued at £200—to the University. He was not against the fence being removed, but the