

# The Advertiser

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## EDUCATION COSTS

The Australian public has been compelled, under the pressure of economic truth, to weigh the value of State services against their cost. The result is a wider appreciation of the fact that a period of prosperity caused by lavish borrowing has established a standard, for most of our public utilities, that cannot be maintained under present conditions. The question is not what is good for the people, but what the people can afford. This question had to be wisely determined by the pioneers of this country and by succeeding generations, until governmental squandermania created a taste for indulgence and a spirit of dependence upon the State. Now, too many people demand as a right, not only free education and free medical attention, but non-contributory pensions, bonuses, subsidies, and many other costly things besides. Free education, which at first involved no more than taking the child to school during the period of compulsory attendance, has been extended to nearly all forms of secondary training. Naturally, the expenditure has leapt to a height at which the system is threatened with collapse under its own weight. The State Government has made an effort—within the limits imposed by its determination to maintain the standards—raised in previous times—to prune the education vote. But the total outlay upon education maintains colossal proportions. Victoria has now decided that, if parents are to bear upon higher education their children, they must be prepared to contribute towards its cost. The Victorian Government may be credited with an appreciation of the value of education; it is merely recognizing the inability of the State to continue to provide it free on the present lavish scale. Today we publish the news that the New South Wales Government is almost certain to impose a charge for secondary schooling.

South Australia is confronted with at least an equally serious financial situation, and the Government cannot escape the need to cut its coat according to its cloth. At present it may be impracticable in this State to require, as an invariable rule, the payment of fees for the education of the primary standard, because lack of employment is causing children to stay longer than usual at school; but the parents of many children in the secondary schools do contribute something towards the cost of education, even now, might well be examined, the necessary allowances being made for the existing level of taxation. A service the cost of which increased in the last decade nearly 75 per cent. in the aggregate, and over 60 per cent. per child—expenditure on buildings being excluded—is in danger of becoming an incubus beyond the power of the community to support. If there are insuperable difficulties in the way of fixing fees for secondary education at present, the Government should examine the position without further delay, and prepare a scale of fees which should be rigidly enforced when the economic depression passes. It is not necessary to deny advanced education to any talented child. The numerous bursaries and scholarships offered, open the way to the University without fees for any who are mentally equipped to take advantage of the opportunities thus presented. If parents desire that children lacking that mental equipment should receive the education they should be prepared to pay for it.

## AN EXCELLENT SCHOOLBOOK

We have received from Messrs. Gillingham & Co. "A Modern Geography for Australian Schools." The author is Mr. Ivor C. Symons, school geography master of the Adelaide High School.

Geography is now taught much more thoroughly than it used to be. There are still many who can remember the elementary or, it might be called, the grammar school, where the study of it began and ended. The pupil was set to work on a map and to learn the names and position of the oceans, the continents, the larger seas, the various countries, the great rivers, the principal cities and towns, mountains, rivers, and lakes. Beyond the main physical features, they had little or no knowledge of the world. No attempt was made to give more than the barest outlines of the history and social conditions, if even so much. And, as in the foreword to Mr. Symons's book, the Director of Education remarked, the teaching of geography was confined to the primary school and discontinued at the first record of secondary education. Very different is the position today. In all modern curricula, says Mr. Adey, a prominent and important place. Concerned as it is with the interactions between the physical and the human factors, the study contributes to the practical, economic, social, and political education of the citizen. It enlarges his knowledge of the scope of his subject matter is enlarged accordingly. The book is written by Mr. Symons, "the scholar may gain a sympathetic understanding of the lives of people in his own and other countries, and may become not only an intelligent citizen of his own land, but a citizen of the world." So valuable is this study now admitted to be that in most modern universities a Chair of Geography has been established, and full courses of from two to four years are provided.

Wide Range of Teaching

Mr. Symons's book provides a course in this subject for the first two years in post-primary schools, and covers the subjects of the syllabus of the examination of the Public Examinations Board, University of Adelaide, with the syllabus of the examination of the South Australian Board of Examinations, for the first two years of the "General Studies" in Australia. A Geographical Study. Though designed to cover the first two years of secondary school, it can be used, also, to usefully also to teachers of the subject in the primary and secondary primary schools. One sometimes hears that the modern tendency in schools is to concentrate on the study of geography should have full justice done to it, even if some other subject has to suffer. Mr. Symons has planned his book so intelligently and simply that no competent teacher can fail to find it, to interest and instruct his classes. The author begins with several chapters on the earth, its size and shape, its movements in space, the study of climate generally, and Australian climates in particular, the making and using of maps, movements of the earth's crust, and erosion. Then, as the student of geography should begin with his own country, nineteen chapters follow dealing with Australia and Tasmania, the major physical features, vegetation, primary and secondary industries, trade and commerce, distribution of population, and rainfall. New Guinea, New Zealand, the Islands of the Pacific, South Africa, Malaya, India, China, and Japan next receive attention, and succeeding chapters are devoted to the British Isles, the British Commonwealth of Nations, the Continent of Europe, and the United States, and South America. The last six sections treat of vegetable and animal foodstuffs, textile raw materials, other vegetable products, power, minerals, and the nature and location of cities. There is also an appendix treating of the making of the general map of the world. This summary of the contents indicates the wide range of subjects covered by the book. It is an excellent book, and the book a valuable store-house of well-digested information. Credit is due to the author for the manner in which the book is written in a convenient format, the clear typography, and the excellent production of the maps, diagrams, and illustrations.

## BACHELORS OF ARTS BY CORRESPONDENCE

External Courses At Queensland University

An interesting account of the system in vogue in University education in Queensland, was given yesterday by Mr. T. E. Jones, director of external studies at the University of Queensland.

It is said the department was established in 1911 with the object of making the University work available as far as possible to any student in Queensland. It was actually founded by the only one of the students in such a way, because of the practical course which was requisite in the other faculties. It was actually founded by a student to obtain the B.A. degree without ever attending the University, although ever since it has been used to encourage students to spend at least one or two days attendance, either as a day or evening student. The students themselves realised how helpful and desirable it was to have such a course, and some who had completed their B.A. course as purely external students came to the University, and some of which would not be done unless they had attended for at least one year, having done as much preliminary work as possible.

The number of external students had however steadily increased from 1915 to over 300 last year, said Mr. Jones. That increase was due partly to the growing number of those taking the B.A. course, partly to the fact that State school teachers could only get their one-class qualification by taking a specified number of first year arts courses, and partly to the development of University activities and the establishment of courses leading to the degree of Bachelor of Commerce, and the Diploma of Journalism. External students were treated as far as possible on the same basis as those attending the University. They paid the same fees and sat for the examination with the same paper, and on the same day as the others. Examination papers were arranged for them as near to their place of residence as possible. Their thoroughly reliable conditions, their papers were sent to the University, and were marked by the same examiners as those of the other students, so that from a purely examination point of view, the external graduate thoroughly deserved the credit of his success, although he might have been debarred from taking his part in the intellectual life of the University, which was so valuable. External students were to be admitted for their course in facing their work without personal contact with the lecturers and fellow-students, and with no hope of reference to which they could have access.

Mr. Jones said that the assistance given by the University was by means of full and accurate notes of the lectures, with the same directions for their work, and the same set work as was given to the students attending. They were also invited and encouraged in every way to come to the University, whenever they were in Brisbane, for however short a period, and to meet the officials with whom they were concerned. A large percentage of external students were State school teachers, who might be transferred from Brisbane during their course. They could then become external students, and continue their work in that way.

"With this method of training," he said, "the University is endeavouring to act up to its title of the 'University of Queensland'."

From Our Special Correspondent

SYDNEY, August 18.

Saving in Education

Faced with the prospect of a £5,000,000 reduction of estimated deficit, the Premier's Education Conference, the Government is considering the possibilities of saving in education. At present the Government cost £4,500,000. It is almost certain that fees—£2 a term have been mentioned as a possible source of higher school education. By this and other means it is believed £140,000 might be recovered.

Another problem is the training of teachers. Two training colleges, one at Sydney and one at Armidale, cost £1,100,000 a year. The Government is unable to find employment for would-be teachers who have passed through the colleges and the imposition of High School fees would reduce a demand that even fewer teachers would be required.

However, the decision to dispense with the services of married women teachers, except those able to prove hardship, will save £200,000. The University of Sydney has approached the Government to reduce the number of its research students. There are regular 1,200 students receiving free education who would otherwise have to pay for their education costs the University £70,000.

## EDUCATION AND ECONOMY

TRAINING COLLEGE NECESSARY TO THE EDUCATOR

Sir—One of the "Ex-Teacher's" desire for anonymity when one examines the letter in Thursday's issue. The first question is: What is the committee which recently investigated State education did not recommend? The answer is: A training college of education. If "Ex-Teacher" has had any experience of our educational system, he would not be surprised if the Director and his superintendents function as a board, and that an additional administrative committee would involve increased expense.

The misstatements concerning the "Training College" are so numerous that I cannot begin to list them. For instance, one cannot agree with him that the retirement of teachers from the profession of 10 leaves "precisely a full staff." As it is a matter of conjecture, "Ex-Teacher" is right in assuming that there are sufficient trained teachers to fill all vacancies for the next two years. The question is: How many vacancies will eventually?

From his statement that "there are dozens of bachelors of arts and science who have obtained their degrees without cost to the taxpayer," it is evident that "Ex-Teacher" thinks that the University education of teachers is an expense to the department. It does not seem to him that an arrangement between the Government and the University, teachers being paid for their training without cost to the department. But even assuming that there are no trained teachers available, it still need training to fit them as teachers, and this training can best be obtained in the "Teachers' College" of the practicing schools—I am, Sir, &c.

General Secretary, F. FORDAN, Public Teachers' Union.

Education and Economy

"Ex-Teacher," Wyville.—One of the recommendations of a commission which reported last year was that there should be a board of education. Many taxpayers, while holding the view that there should be the highest esteem, would endorse this recommendation. Take as an instance what it would mean to the system without impairing the system, the position of the Teachers' College. There must be between 140 and 150 hundred trained teachers waiting for vacancies in two other States where supply of teachers is demanded when every college has been closed for the time being. But here the college is to be fitted up with a practically full staff. Students go to the University professors for lectures, and are being trained for teaching practice. The candidates have been reduced by about 75 per cent. of lecturers to do? Another anomaly appears to be that while first-year students are expected an extension of time and allowance, although they have finished training, are sufficient trained teachers to fill all vacancies for the next two years. The college system evolved. There are dozens of bachelors of arts and science who have obtained their degrees without cost to the taxpayer. Those desiring to be teachers are required to attend practicing schools. The best could be selected, again, without cost to the taxpayer. At least a trial of such a scheme might be given while the burden of the tax is being transferred to the education system would not be impaired, on the other hand, which provides outlook might be secured.