

adw 26/3/25

adw. 28/3/25.

Reg. 31/3/25

EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

LECTURE BY DR. HEATON.

There was a large attendance at the Institute Building, North-terrace, on Wednesday evening, when Dr. Heaton opened the annual conference of the Workers' Educational Association with a public lecture on "Educational developments in England and North America."

The chairman (Mr. E. Cheary) introduced Dr. Heaton, who said that during his recent trip abroad he had endeavored to take a general survey in university and adult educational circles. In Great Britain he had found that all forms of educational activity were stunted for want of cash. After the war had come unemployment, European confusion, and the threat of the Geddes axe. Fortunately the blow of the axe had been diverted to a certain extent, and educational prospects had recently shown some slight signs of improvement, but the burden was still a crushing one, with crowded and understaffed schools, and there was a great deal of unemployment among trained teachers. Classes in the universities were crowded, inadequate staffs were underpaid, and the lot of many of the junior dons was so bad that the Association of University Teachers was acting in a great measure as a trade union. Despite all this there was amazing vigor in the educational life of the country, and conferences of educationists were almost epidemic in their frequency. He had been deeply disappointed in the reception of Dominion students who wished to enter the British universities for further study or research. Perhaps this was not to be wondered at when they thought of the hordes of undergraduates with whom the university authorities had to deal. In one economics class in London alone there were 190 students, and 140 of these came from somewhere east of Suez. The result of all this overcrowding was that the overseas graduate had too often to hawk himself round in order to find someone to supervise his researches. He had endeavored to get one English university to lay itself out to encourage the Australian or Canadian student, but without marked success, and if anything did come of his efforts it would probably be in Manchester. At present it was sadly true that young Canadians or Australians were more likely to get a good reception, status, and assistance at Harvard or Chicago than in an English university.

British students and teachers were interested in the problem of domestic and international reform. Academics played a prominent part in political life. A Cambridge-London group, of which Mr. Keynes was the best known figure, was playing a large part in reshaping Liberal policy, and scores of dons were helping the Labor Party. The Conservatives seemed alone devoid of academic support, outside Oxford. Adult education was now firmly established as an integral part of university work, and the departments of extra-mural studies were strongly organized in both new and old universities. The W.E.A. came of age in 1924, with 25,000 members, nearly a thousand classes, and 24,000 students. Local educational authorities were organizing adult classes, especially in rural areas, and political and religious bodies ran regular summer schools.

In America the belief in the value of education ran through all sections of society. Rich men regarded gifts for education as a normal method of spending their money. Canadian Governments made grants of land and money, and spent £2 16/ per head of population on education, against £1 11/ in Australia. Winnipeg in its boom days lavished nearly £1,000,000 on the building of its agricultural college. North American people, both in town and country, believed in the value of training. Hence the universities were popular and over-crowded. In 1922 there

and even assisted the work of the John Ambulance Association in rural areas. Through all this work there ran a lively imagination, much resourcefulness, and a willingness to serve in every possible way. Educationists in new and old lands alike were faced with big tasks, either of salvage of an old civilisation or of building up a new one. In spite of over-work, under-pay, and lack of material they were doing their job in a fine spirit of public service.

Reg 27/3/25.

TEACHING SCIENCE.

PROFESSOR ROBERTSON'S IDEAS.

Speaking on "The teaching of elementary science," Professor T. Brailford Robertson delivered the second of two free public lectures in connection with the eighth annual conference of the Workers' Educational Association at the Institute Lecture Room, North terrace, Adelaide, on Thursday evening. The Chairman was Mr. E. B. Cheary, President of the association, and the attendance was large.

Professor Robertson said that owing to the crowded condition of their school curricula, any subject which was being taught in the schools, or which was proposed to be taught in the schools, stood in need of championing to get it introduced to keep it there, and to secure that sufficient attention be given to it. Subjects were usually advocated on the ground of their cultural or utilitarian value. Usually those who proposed a subject on account of its cultural merits, despised and belittled its utilitarian value; but when the cultural arguments for a subject failed its protagonists were not at all slow to turn around and accept the utilitarian. A mere study of the classical languages was useless, unless it enabled one to gain a knowledge of the literature of which they were the medium of expression. Many students of the ancient languages never reached the stage when they were able to acquaint themselves with the literature of those times. The fact was that many men who knew little Latin and less Greek—Shakespeare, Faraday, and in the medical sphere John Hunter—had contributed in a stupendous measure to man's knowledge of himself. The teaching of science was very mistakenly advocated on utilitarian grounds, and for its value in enabling an individual to earn a livelihood. Education was to prepare a man for his environment—to explain the why and wherefore of life and natural phenomena, and the trend of science and invention. That was the noble ideal for which all educationists were really striving, and in a nutshell it could be summed up in the words of Plato, "Man, know thyself." An education was necessary that would enable a man to adapt himself to his environment, and face his duties with the broadest possible viewpoint. In considering which sciences should be taught in schools, in the past, the utilitarian aspect had weighed most with them. A committee appointed in England in 1917, to enquire into the condition of science in the schools and the improvements desirable, if any, made a number of recommendations for the teaching of science which were admirable. The first recommendation was that science should be taught from the beginning upwards, and not be left until towards the end of the school career; also that it should be taught not from the view of making a boy a skilled engineer, artisan, or specialist, but with the object of improving his general knowledge and culture. The committee suggested a course that started with an exhaustive explanation of some simple natural phenomena, and taking that as a basis extended as far as the bounds of human comprehension—consistent with the age of pupils. He feared they had made little progress towards working on the English committee's suggestions in Australia, but at Harrow, England, a course, entitled "Science for all" had been practised for years. He would like to see science taught in the schools more from the view of its importance in the life of mankind than for the purpose of making specialists and artisans. (Applause).

Monter 31/3/25

THE PAVIA UNIVERSITY.

The Council of the Adelaide University has appointed the Chancellor (Sir George Murray) and Professor Archibald Strong to represent the University at the celebration of the eleventh centenary of the University of Pavia on May 8. The invitation received by the Council contains a sketch of the history of this ancient University and refers to a former scholar, Lanfranc, who was born in Pavia, later became Archbishop of Canterbury.

THE SCHOOL OF FORESTRY.

COMMONWEALTH AID SOUGHT.

A deputation from the Forest League waited upon the Prime Minister (Mr. Bruce) yesterday to ask for Commonwealth recognition and support for the School of Forestry at the Adelaide University.

In introducing the deputation, which included Mr. H. H. Corbin (lecturer of Forestry, Adelaide University), Captain S. A. White, Councillor G. McEwin and Messrs. W. G. Tait (secretary of the Good Roads Association), and J. Howard Vaughan, Mr. E. A. Anthony, M.P., declared that a world shortage of timber was imminent. He referred to the importance of the work done at the Forestry School, which was the only one of its kind in Australia that gave a complete curriculum since its establishment in 1913. Its graduates were to be found in all States, and in addition it drew its students from all over Australia. Some time ago a suggestion had been made that such a school should be established in the bush, but that would be neither economical nor efficient. They were asking for Commonwealth recognition and support in order that the school might be made more effective.

Mr. Corbin said the school was doing a national work, and was the only school which awarded a science degree. It was as well placed in Adelaide as anywhere, and had done a considerable amount of pioneering work. There was a great need for trained foresters. The school had turned out 29 students of whom 14 held the B.Sc. degree, and one had a diploma. A former student was now Conservator of Forests in Western Australia. The school needed to expand, and the forests of Australia would be all the better managed by trained men. The University needed funds, and as the Commonwealth subsidised educational efforts in the other States, they confidently asked for support for the school. It would be a worthy contribution to a worthy work.

It was recognised, declared Mr. Vaughan, that they could not have development without trained men with a University course. That training, too, must be centred in one capital city. The best place for the school was in Adelaide, and all the States were willing to co-operate with Adelaide. They were only waiting for the Commonwealth Government to take the lead and join in.

Mr. Bruce remarked that he did not think anybody could fail to fully appreciate the importance of a proper system of afforestation in any country, particularly Australia. They could create great reserves if they took hold of the matter now. It was a question which had been considered on an empire basis, both by a conference in Canada, and by the Economic Conference in England. Vast areas of forest lands, especially in Western Australia, would eventually be turned into agricultural lands. If that was so they were going to destroy a great national asset. The question should be approached on a proper scientific basis. It was obvious that there should be some centre of instruction, but the question of forests did not come within the jurisdiction of the Commonwealth. It was for the States to combine and approach the Commonwealth in the matter. His Government would be prepared then to consider the question sympathetically. It was obvious that the Ministers responsible in the States should call a conference of all the States interested.

Advertiser 31/3/25.

CONFERENCE OF MUSIC TEACHERS.

Arrangements are in hand for holding another conference of music teachers in Adelaide similar to the one held last year. Members of the staff of the Adelaide Conservatorium have promised to assist, and a programme of lectures and demonstrations will be arranged. Mr. G. Pearce has been appointed temporarily to act as secretary, and it is expected that the conference will be held in July.

UNIVERSITY RESEARCH WORK.

FOUR FEDERAL ALLOCATIONS.

MELBOURNE, Monday.

When the Minister for Markets and Migration (Sr. Wilson) was Minister for Health he received a deputation from the council of the Melbourne University asking that the Commonwealth grant of £5,000 should be made available for cancer research. Since taking over the duties of the post Sir Neville Howse, V.C., has given considerable consideration to the matter. After enquiring into the work which is being carried out in Melbourne, Sydney, and Adelaide, Sir Neville Howse has decided to allocate the money so that four different lines of investigation will be assisted. At present the University of Sydney is enquiring into the effect of various forms of electrical rays upon the growth of living cells, the University of Melbourne is investigating the question whether any relationship exists between the occurrence of cancer and the responses of the body to certain bacterial infections, and the University of Adelaide is trying to trace the factors which control the growth of living cells. Sir Neville Howse has resolved to give grants to these three universities which will enable the researches mentioned to be carried on more extended bases than have hitherto been found possible. The fourth share in the grant will be placed to the credit of the Commonwealth serum laboratories, in which there is at present proceeding an investigation to discover if possible the laws underlying the method of growth of microscopic cells in response to various forms of irritating foreign agents.

In order to avoid any overlapping, and to ensure that the result of the work in progress, will be closely examined by a group of men best qualified to form an opinion, Sir Neville Howse has associated with himself an advisory committee composed of the representatives of the three universities.