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# SECESSION

## PLAYING WITH FIRE

### Another Convention Urged

(By A. C. Stevens, M.A.)

Anybody familiar with present conditions in Tasmania sympathises with the strong lead she is giving to the movement for secession from the Commonwealth. People living in South Australia, Western Australia, and to a less extent Queensland, the least-favored States, are not unthinkingly to take up the refrain, with disastrous consequences.

This summer has been ruinous to the island State. The shipping trouble has



directly prevented thousands of tourists from visiting Tasmania, while thousands more have been indirectly diverted through fear of the trouble boiling up again at any minute. The Navigation Act in the past has prevented ocean going ships taking interstate trade or passengers to and from Tasmania, with

the result that she is perpetually at the mercy of a restricted shipping service which at any moment may be cut off. This is felt to be a great hardship, as it is Federation which has brought it about.

In fact, Tasmania is under that particular obsession which traces all her ills to Federation. She has contributed large revenues to the Federal Treasury, but she has received no outstanding recompense in the form of Commonwealth expenditures within the island. The Federal Government will not market her hops, will not sufficiently protect the carbide industry, has, in short, invited secession by ignoring her frequent plaints.

### A THOUGHT FOR TODAY

In the mind-history of every land there is a time when slavish imitation is inculcated as a duty and novelty is regarded as a crime.—Reade.

Secession talk is often deliberately entered into with the view of driving a firm political bargain. If the Tasmanian or other representatives from a State to the Federal Parliament can be sufficiently firmly stiffened upon the dogma of all or nothing and the threat of secession be taken seriously enough, then the State is likely to get all it asks for. With Tasmania that means the lifting of the Navigation Act and all-round paternal assistance to industry.

### SERIOUS SITUATION

The seriousness of the situation for Tasmania can be realised from the fact that there are large shops in the main streets languishing for tenants, house property values have declined, businesses are unmanageable, and all over the island business is worse than has been the case for years. And this in a time when the prosperity of the mainland is such that glittering new motor cars are spreading like measles over districts which have been poor from time immemorial.

If such propaganda as we have recently had in the direction of secession is meant seriously, it can have only one end, and that is a state of violence. The present Constitution provides for a majority in all States before secession can be brought about legally, and that majority is impossible in the main States, Victoria and New South Wales, who benefit so greatly by Federation. If a gathering of citizens is wanted to discuss through their representatives the modification of the Constitution so as to give the smaller States a better deal, why not agitate for that?

The only practicable prospect of secession, when the question is looked into, is one of violence. The State owns the police force, and the Commonwealth Government knows that it cannot use the militia for such circumstances. Secession could be brought about by some symbolic revolutionary action, like that of the American declaration through the sailing of tea into Boston Harbor.

Let it be said, however, that it is fatal to talk violence, and that it is playing with fire to talk secession. The American Civil War came about through States like Virginia, with real and imaginary grievances, talking in terms of secession, and violence.

### TIME IS RIPE

The smaller States have got themselves into a bad mess, and they have to get themselves out of it, but not by violence, or by plunging out of the frying pan of a bad Federation into the fire of a worse isolation. What is wanted is not secession, but a more equitable Federation. There is nothing wrong with the idea of Federation, but only with the way in which it at present works out.

There is no prospect of Western Australia, South Australia, and Queensland taking up with a movement for secession. There is every likelihood that if the idea of Federation were fairly set forth the States mentioned would join with Tasmania in seeking redress through properly-appointed means. The time is ripe for a fresh Federal Convention, at which the various States should be represented, and wherein the representatives might arrive through a series of resolutions at an agreement as to the modifications necessary to the Constitution.

For instance, questions ripe for discussion are the tariff and its snowball character since Federation; its use as a means of giving the Commonwealth Government financial predominance; the arbitration system; the possibilities of reducing State functions and staffs where the Federal Government has satisfactorily entered into the spheres; defence; Commonwealth and State debts; the possibility of curbing Commonwealth rapacity by making it dependent on financial grants from the States.

In short, the Federal experiment has turned out far otherwise than was expected by the founders of its constitution, who wrote it partly in terms of their fallacious expectations. The Constitution has to be rewritten in terms of actual results and crying evils, and this is the only sane way in which to destroy the rapidly growing movement across the Commonwealth for chaotic and dangerous secession.

# THE NEWS

SATURDAY, MARCH 14, 1925

## THE HUMANITIES

(By Harry Thomson)

The recent short sojourn in this city of Dr. Rendall was not quite unnoticed, in spite of Mr. Grimmett's bowling. In any other but a City of Crete the visit of the head master of Winchester and one of Great Britain's foremost educationists would have been quite unnoticed, but, as it was, one or two public meetings were arranged, and one or two paragraphs written. Still Dr. Rendall was running a risk.

In future visitors of renown should be asked to time their visits better. None should coincide with the visit of an English team, and, a fortiori, none should come in winter, when football holds sway. And if meetings must be addressed, Wednesday should always be chosen, for then the post mortems of the previous Saturday's match will have died down, and interest in the succeeding Saturday's match will scarcely have arisen.

### Secondary Schools

It will be gathered that Dr. Rendall did not make a great mark on the national life while here. Explicitly, in fact, he said little. Implicitly he said a great deal. On general education he implied that our secondary schools do not go far enough with the teaching of classics and history, and that schools and University alike stress far too much the materialistic and utilitarian side of education.

Primarily—Dr. Rendall would say—education is not to make a man a good auditor or a good bank manager, but a good all-round citizen. Ingersoll wrote that college is a place where diamonds are dimmed and pebbles are polished. And as most of us are fated to be pebbles only, Dr. Rendall would have us all nicely polished as well as merely provided with a cutting edge wherewith to hack our way through the world.

### Back Through the Ages

For the reason that there is nothing new under the sun, all of us in our lives do little more than repeat the lives of the human race back through the ages. They laughed and loved and fought much as we. They speculated about politics and ethics

real reason why the true study of man is man, and why history is the mother of all learning.

Plutarch's lives and Papy's Diary are true for all times and all places, and there is far more of real education for life in one or the other of these books than in the Motorist's Manual or Pitman's shorthand. The latter merely provide tools of trade. The former provide not merely a philosophy, but an art of life. Swimming is a useful accomplishment, but not very practical unless there is a place in which to swim.

### Education for Service

Implicit in Dr. Rendall's remarks was another criticism, namely, failure to realise that education, as life, ought to be an education for service. This is simply repeating what Ruskin taught in "Unto This Last." "The Rhodes scholarships," to quote Dr. Rendall, "were not created merely to make better doctors or better lawyers," and Dr. Rendall seemed to display some little disappointment that more returned Rhodes scholars had not gone in for politics and become Cabinet Ministers, at the least.

Dr. Rendall forgot, of course, that nearly all of them had given the highest form of public service at the war. He over-emphasised, too, the importance in Australia of the politician. In Australia, as contradistinguished from Great Britain, politics is on a much lower scale. It is often the vehicle for personal ambition or simply regarded as the purveyor of desirable loaves and fishes.

### Federal and State Politics

There is not a family tradition to enter politics nor, save in the rarest case (of which Dr. Earle Page is an example) is it embraced simply as a high form of social service. And whatever may be the case in Federal politics, State politics do not matter nearly as much as we have been accustomed to think.

True, the State legislature passes half a hundred new Statutes a session, but very few of them much affect the prosperity or the happiness of the State. Most of them could be enacted equally well by a glorified district council—if it is worth enacting them at all. The form is largely dictated by the Parliamentary draftsman, who is supposed always to have two or three Bills handy in case they are wanted. In effect, most of them are largely departmental, and of policy, or difference of policy, there is very little.

The real cause of the apathy among State electors is the sheer absence of any serious controversial issue. In State matters the best Government would probably be a board of directors of business men, and the best methods those found effective in business everywhere. In that respect Dr. Rendall's criticism fails of its effect, because quite as effective social service can be done outside the halls of the Legislature, and probably is being done.

On his main theme—the importance of the humanities in education—there can be no dissent. To the lawyer they furnish a vocabulary and a power of expression and a wealth of illustration; to the doctor they afford an understanding and an insight; to the merchant a sense of values and a meaning in life; and to the average citizen color and tone and comparison. It raises him a little more above the animal and the automaton in his long evolutionary climb.

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**PUBLIC LECTURE**, by Professor Coleman Phillipson, M.A., LL.D., Litt.D., on "Should Capital Punishment be Abolished?" To-night, 8 p.m., Institute Room, North terrace. Arranged by Women's Non-Party Association. Collection for Expenses. A

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### THE UNIVERSITY CHORAL CLASS.

The Director of the Conservatorium announces that rehearsals under Mr. Frederick Bevan will begin on Tuesday next at 8 p.m. The works to be performed this year are Handel's "Acis and Galatea" and Mendelssohn's "Athalia." Intending members are requested to interview Mr. Bevan on Tuesday next between 7 and 8 p.m.

## LEAVER BURSARY

Award to R. W. Mathews

### FINE SCHOOL RECORD

Reginald William Mathews, aged 17, son of Mr. E. E. Mathews, 43 Dutton terrace, Medindie, has been awarded the Leaver Bursary (Diploma in Commerce), presented by Mr. R. H. Leaver to the Commercial Travellers and Warehousemen's Association. The scholarship entitles the winner, who has been a year at the Adelaide University, to finish his course there.



Reginald William Mathews who has been awarded the Leaver Bursary.

Mathews has a fine scholastic record. For eight years he attended Queen's School, and during that time was either first or second in each term. When 13½ he passed his junior public examination, taking seven out of eight subjects. These were arithmetic, algebra, geometry, chemistry, history, Latin, and French. He passed his senior public the following year, securing six subjects out of eight, these being English literature, Latin, arithmetic and algebra, geometry, trigonometry, and inorganic chemistry. In 1922 he took his higher public, passing in pure mathematics and chemistry. Next year he was successful in his intermediate commercial examination, passing in business correspondence, shorthand, and typewriting. The same year he succeeded in his leaving commercial examination, passing in book-keeping.

In 1923 he sat for Stott's scholarship. He secured first place with 238 marks out of a possible 240.

He has been studying industrial and commercial law at the University for the last year in connection with his Diploma in Commerce.

His father was employed by Sand and McDougall for many years, but is now with the firm of Holiday Brothers.

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Dr. J. G. Sleeman

new medical superintendent Adelaide Hospital