

"Books Should Be Free"

Despite the recommendation of the Tariff Board, against a duty, and the protests of educationalists and bookmen throughout Australia, the House of Representatives on Wednesday day to impose heavier prime and sales tax on books.

"The tax is one of the most serious blows to education that have ever befallen Australia," said the librarian at the Public Library (Mr. Furnell) yesterday.

"The object of our liberal system of school education is to lay the foundation for the wider education to be obtained by reading," he added, "and access to books should be made as easy as possible. To put a tax on books is disastrous."

Important Books Kept Out

Mr. Furnell said that the cost of books was probably higher in Australia than in any part of the world, without taxes and an adverse exchange rate. It was one of the few countries in the world to impose such taxation, and that in the rate of the Tariff Board's recommendation no duty should be placed on books and periodicals.

The effect of the tax has been to keep out the books most needed in the work of reconstruction here," he added. "The prices have become almost prohibitive."

The secretary of the Workers' Educational Association (Mr. McMillan) declared recently that the increased rate of tax had been collected since August, the full effect would not be felt until the next year, for most of their text books had been bought this year before the tax was increased.

"It is iniquitous to tax the pursuit of knowledge for the sake of a few thousands of pounds," he added. "Books should be free."

Mr. McMillan said the tax had already prevented many students from obtaining all their books.

Sales Falling Away  
The president of the Booksellers' Association (Mr. Beck) said the only crumb of comfort from the situation was that the voting on the line had been close.

The Minister of Customs expects £100,000 from primage and sales tax on books in 1931, but says that that amount is unlikely to be realized. Last year the import value of books fell from £150,000 to £100,000, and that he expects this year to fall to £50,000. We are not landing anything under 75 per cent on London prices. People simply cannot afford to buy books, and the tax can never be produced in Australia."

The secretary of the Booksellers' Association (Mr. Low) said that the most disastrous feature of the matter was that educational books had been cut. "Not only has the cost of school books become almost prohibitive, but research workers and advanced students are being badly hampered in their work."

"The tax is having a serious effect on the intellectual life of the people," he added, "and the situation must be viewed with alarm by all but thinking people."

Adv. 9-10-31  
TO BE ISOLATED AGAIN!  
Cutting Off Australia's Book Supply

By H. RUTHERFORD FURNELL, Public Librarian  
The standard of education that English children have inherited as the inheritance of the people of this continent is the envy of all the inhabitants of Australia (if one may use the word "education" in such a collection) and one of the signs of the progress of our civilization is that we have been able to escape from the isolation of the past of the world. The European culture which has since taken the place of the primitive and savage life of our ancestors while settlers brought some of them; but the national stock has been immeasurably increased since the coming of the last century and most of all in the last few years. This increase we owe to the continuing importation of books. With their aid we have been able to keep in touch with the outer world. In every department of mental and cultural development books have carried us along with the human progress. It is the bringing of books to be cut off and to be cut off is a disaster of the first order. The hammered in progress that is being taken in Parliament on Wednesday

Tax on Knowledge  
In the plans for educating a democracy books play an all-important part. In Britain, the United States, Canada, the countries of Europe, not only is there a free, but there is a very liberal supply of books to which everyone has free access for the most important self-education of the year. In Australia, however, over, are reasonably cheap in these countries. The cost of books in Australia is, however, probably higher than anywhere else in the world. Book prices have always had to reflect the cost of freight, insurance, and other charges that have to be added to their cost. Then came the advance tax in itself, which has added to the cost of books at once influenced the supply of books, by raising the price inordinately. On top of this came primage and sales taxes, which, however necessary in their incidence on our bodily needs, were disastrous in their effect on our mental growth, and on the education of our branch of education from which already it will take some time to recover. It is, however, even the present dearth of books will be a permanent deprivation of Australians among the nations.

The Cost  
Mr. Forde said that the primage on books would bring in £100,000 a year in revenue (based on an importation of £2,000,000 worth), which the Government could use for the education of the young, which the Minister cannot believe that the loss of such a sum would be too high a price to pay for the avoidance of damage to our intellectual, social and political life. In any event such less sum is involved. Importations of books worth £2,000,000, a falling off of almost £300,000, which is but a beginning, since there were figures from the British public booksellers' representatives show that the sales of books in 1930 fell to £1,400,000, and this fall too, is only a beginning.

It should be remembered that the £2,000,000 worth of books that the Government has proposed to tax on its duty on books, and after weighing all the evidence, came to the unanimous conclusion that it would be better to let the Government to Australia, even in the case of fiction. Some of the greatest minds of the world, of the most distinguished schools, and many works of fiction are made available to our people through the booksellers. Moreover, there are many other books of great value, such as the works of William Hay, Heron, Havel, Ashton, Katherine Susannah Prichard, C. G. Roseman, A. G. Hales—books that are a few—these would be affected severely from the incidence of a tariff. It was impossible to discriminate between these and other books, and he emphasized that there should be no tariff.

Irreparable Damage  
All the evidence that was then put forward applies equally to the entire book trade, and to the booksellers who are involved in the trade. It is in his opinion that the loss of such a sum would be too high a price to pay for the avoidance of damage to our intellectual, social and political life. In any event such less sum is involved. Importations of books worth £2,000,000, a falling off of almost £300,000, which is but a beginning, since there were figures from the British public booksellers' representatives show that the sales of books in 1930 fell to £1,400,000, and this fall too, is only a beginning. It should be remembered that the £2,000,000 worth of books that the Government has proposed to tax on its duty on books, and after weighing all the evidence, came to the unanimous conclusion that it would be better to let the Government to Australia, even in the case of fiction. Some of the greatest minds of the world, of the most distinguished schools, and many works of fiction are made available to our people through the booksellers. Moreover, there are many other books of great value, such as the works of William Hay, Heron, Havel, Ashton, Katherine Susannah Prichard, C. G. Roseman, A. G. Hales—books that are a few—these would be affected severely from the incidence of a tariff. It was impossible to discriminate between these and other books, and he emphasized that there should be no tariff.

It is anomalous that all this should be done by the only Government department which has special emphasis on the need for the education of the young. It is the duty of the Government to insure that the educational principles of democracy. The Australian nation can compare favorably in mental capacity with any nation of the world. But even high intellectual ability cannot withstand the handicap of the lack of equipment in this line in any degree of the source of the education of the young. It would be a lamentable loss in charge of a section of the population, to send them for supplies from the north to South. He expects to leave on his return trip to Adelaide about Christmas time.

Adv. 20-10-31  
Prof. Harvey Johnston New Royal Society President

Prof. T. Harvey Johnston was elected president of the Royal Society of South Australia at the annual meeting. He is the first Australian to hold the office. The other candidates were Prof. J. A. Prescott and Mr. J. M. Black (vice-presidents), Prof. Walter Howchin (editor of the journal), Prof. R. L. E. Bosworth (treasurer), R. R. L. E. Bosworth (secretary), W. S. G. Hales (joint secretary), Herbert M. Hale, Sir Joseph C. Verco, and Dr. T. E. Hart (joint secretaries), Mr. F. J. R. Kerr, Grant, Dr. A. L. Lamb (consultant), Prof. Kerr Grant, and Sir Horace Lamb (representatives of the society on various scientific and industrial committees).

Adv. 21-10-31  
EXHIBITIONS AND BURSARIES  
Twenty-four intermediate exhibitions and 13 Government bursaries are held annually for competition on the results of the secondary and leaving school examinations respectively of the University. The intermediate exhibitions are valued at £20 a year, and are tenable for three years at a Government high school or other secondary school approved by the Minister. If necessary for the candidate to board away from home to attend the selected school a boarding allowance at the rate of £20 a year will be paid. Government bursaries exempt the holders from all fees, other than fees for approved schools, and boarding allowances at the University of Adelaide in the various courses. In addition a maintenance allowance at the rate of £20 a year will be paid to each bursar, and in the case of a bursar who cannot receive the benefit of his bursary, the maintenance allowance will be increased to £40 a year. Applications for bursaries should be made on forms received at the Education Department on or before October 31, and must be sent in the official form.

Adv. 22-10-31  
"ANOTHER INJUSTICE"  
Taxing Books the Need of Universities

One more injustice to South Australia, a State which has no recourse but to accept poorer quality against the greater amount of its more fortunate neighbor, is how the Vice-Chancellor of the University (Sir William Mitchell) regards the decision of the Federal Government not to exempt books and periodicals from increased taxation. "The Minister of Customs (Mr. Forde) has refused to exempt books and periodicals from increased taxation." The striking facts given by Mr. Rutherford Furnell in "The Advertiser" show that the Government is willing to give a 75 per cent increase in the price of books against the Minister's estimate. It is depressing to think that the excuse for the Tariff Board, and the unanimous finding that to place a duty on books and periodicals would be seriously detrimental to the best interests of Australia.

Potent Force in Research

The State Parliament would not have imposed such a tax, he suggested. The State would have to produce its own professional men, and the increasing research into its own problems. For both purposes the University library was the most essential part of the apparatus. Like the British Museum it served the whole community for "books and journals, but more especially for the use of the student. The more the student reads, because few could be sold. Their published price was more than twice the actual cost of the paper. As an instance he gave the circumstances of a purchase made by him in Melbourne recently. It was a new technical book, needed for his work at the University. "Twenty years ago," he said, "would have been published at 10/6; actually it is published at 4/6. I bought it for 3/6. To see how books and journals are used, and how useless any labor is without them. He expected to take them into any of the University laboratories."

Adv. 23-10-31

Mr. Rex Parsons, M.E. lecturer in electrical engineering at the Adelaide School of Mines, who several months ago obtained a year's leave of absence from his duties, has been reappointed in any degree of the source of the education of the young. It would be a lamentable loss in charge of a section of the population, to send them for supplies from the north to South. He expects to leave on his return trip to Adelaide about Christmas time.

Adv. 24-10-31

Mr. R. C. L. Bosworth, B.Sc., has been elected to the council of the Adelaide School of Mines. He is the son of Mr. and Mrs. R. L. E. Bosworth of Mitcham.

Adv. 24-10-31  
BURDEN ON ALL LEARNING  
How Federal Book Tax Hamper Doctors

No matter what branch of scientific research, or education, is investigated, evidence is found of the burden placed upon scholarship and knowledge by the being deprived of the power of taxation on books imposed by the Federal Government. The inability to purchase the up-to-date literature of the world's scientists and authors, because of prohibitive prices, means that the being deprived of the power to buy the instruments necessary to the profession. Research work will be hampered, undergraduates will be unable to study as extensively, and practicing doctors will find their opportunities of learning seriously restricted, if it becomes possible for all the latest periodicals and volumes necessary to the University to be purchased in instalments. The expenses of undergraduates were high before," said the Dean of the Faculty of Medicine, "and it seems they are to be a greater strain on their parents. It is necessary for them to buy several books each year, and these cannot be disposed of at the end of the course, because they become out of date. The research work is published in new editions about every two or three years, and the need for library books of reference is very great. More than in the more densely populated eastern States. There students have greater opportunities of mingling with Professors, lecturers, and graduates."

Effect on Scientists

He added that medical professors and lecturers, many of whom were engaged on valuable research work, found it essential to refer to the books in the University library. For them to work efficiently and without wandering the ground already covered by scientists in other parts of the world, it was necessary for the library to include all the leading periodicals and books. Increased costs were making this exceedingly difficult. The University library was also the library of the British Medical Association, the only place where the State's doctors could share up-to-date journals and keep abreast of the times.

It will readily be seen what great damage will be done to the State and progress by the increased charges, he went on, "but the effect on the men who practice the profession will be even more grave. Many of them are situated far from their patients, and must depend largely on the library of expensive books for the sustenance of their knowledge, and to keep in touch with the latest developments in science and the medical profession, incoherently have failed, and doctors cannot afford to pay more for their books. The loss of the library of literature simply means less knowledge, and fewer books means less knowledge."

Adv. 24-10-31

Mr. Justice Napier will be 49 today. The youngest in years, although not the junior member of the Supreme Court bench, his appointment in 1914 was one of the most popular made from the ranks of the bar. Since then he has served at the bar steadily and as a man zealous for the best traditions of the profession. Courteous and unassuming, he is a good host. The high quality of human nature and no member of the bench is quicker to recognize the weak points in learned arguments. Always a prominent figure in the ranks of the Master of the craft in South Australia.

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Professor S. M. Wadhwan, professor of agriculture at the Melbourne University, was visited by Mrs. Wadhwan, who arrived in Adelaide yesterday morning. Professor Wadhwan was invited by the local branch of the Economic Society of Australia to deliver a lecture last night on the subject of "Some Economic Aspects of Grazing." The lecture was given at the request of Professor W. K. Hancock.