

# Criticism of Public Examination System

Dec. 19<sup>th</sup>. 1933 to

## VALUE OF SCHOOL CURRICULUM

### Examinations Condemned

#### QUEEN'S COLLEGE SPEECH DAY

##### Little Faith In Education System

"Popular sympathy, however, is always most readily aroused by the success of the man who has made his own way in life. The public has little faith in our educational system."

Examinations, said Mr. Rye, were a sore point with all schoolmasters and most schoolboys. Too long had the Universities been blamed for the overloading of the school curriculum. Universities existed for the training of specialists, and their public examinations were, of necessity, set for their own purpose. Schoolmasters were to blame for allowing themselves to be persuaded into using the Universities for the school's own purpose; and parents must share in this grave responsibility, because they had insisted on their boys securing certificates. Mr. Rye said the answer would be, "Business men insist on certificates." If, however, all parents were united on the subject, business men would insist in vain, and they would come to realize that not one-quarter of the work done to secure the certificate was of practical use to the boy in his business career. The time spent on the other three-quarters could undoubtedly be put to very much better use by the majority of boys.

Business men had told him again and again that if a boy could write intelligent and correct English in a neat hand, use his simple arithmetic rules with accuracy, speak fluently and enunciate clearly, if he had a well-developed sense of duty and the necessary ambition, they could soon train the boy for their purpose. If parents, then, relieved teachers of the necessity of trying to turn almost every boy into a specialist—and not one in a hundred had the necessary innate ability to become one, for, after all, the majority of boys must be average boys—the problem would be solved. Relieved of the necessity to cram boys with knowledge, a large amount of which they would not retain because they would find no use for it, the school could find time to educate its scholars in the more vital things of life.

"We could teach them what a glorious and unselfish thing it is to devote one's life to the service of one's fellow men and fit them for doing so," said Mr. Rye. "Ultimately, then, we should be able to provide the people with trained and unselfish followers, the lack of whom, I feel confident, is at the root of all the world's trouble today."

## MODERN TREND IN EDUCATION

### Authorities Discuss Recent Developments

#### NEXT YEAR'S PLANS

Advances in educational methods during the past year, and improvements which it is hoped to introduce next year, were outlined by leading educationists yesterday. All were towards getting away from what Professor Kerr Grant recently described as the objectionable uniformity of the present school curriculum. General approval was expressed regarding the modifications in the regulations governing public examinations, as a result of which the number of subjects in which candidates must pass to secure the intermediate and leaving certificates has been reduced by one in each instance. The introduction of technical subjects was also considered a step in the right direction.

An interesting experiment which it is intended to try out in selected schools next year was described by the Director of Education (Mr. W. J. Adey). He said that it was proposed to give certain approved teachers authority to put into effect their own ideas, and to permit them to attack the syllabus of instruction and organise their schools along lines which appealed to them. In each inspectorial district a number of teachers had been selected on the recommendation of the district inspector for the experiment, and much enthusiasm and interest were being shown in it. The selected teachers and the inspectors had conferred and submitted proposals to the department for approval. The experiment would be watched with much interest, and he hoped that the measure of freedom extended to such teachers would have good results.

##### Radio And Cinema Used

Mr. Adey said that during the past year experimental work in radio and visual education had been carried out in certain high schools, and particularly at the Adelaide High School. The staff of the latter institution had taken up the question of teaching by films very enthusiastically, and had introduced the cinema into the teaching of science, history, geography, and other subjects. In some instances they had made their own films. Amplifiers had been installed in connection with radio work, so that the school could listen-in to lessons over the air. With the aid of amplifiers, also, the whole school could be addressed in the open air. During the year special classes had been held in musical appreciation. These had been conducted by qualified members of the staff, and occasionally by visitors, among the latter being Dr. Alex Burnard. Regular broadcast talks had also been conducted four days a week in history, literature, elocution, and science, and arrangements had been made to continue and extend these next year.

During July and August a very successful folk school had been held at Murray Bridge for those who had left school, he added. Two evenings a week had been devoted to it, and there had been more than 200 enrolments. The lecturers had been chiefly residents of the town—the local doctors, lawyers, agriculturists, and teachers—supplemented by a number of teachers from the metropolitan area who had volunteered for the work. Lectures had been given in English, history, civics, laws of health and hygiene, agriculture, and science. The enthusiasm and interest shown in the movement had been most gratifying.

#### Value Of Aesthetic Education

The headmaster of Prince Alfred College (Mr. J. F. Ward) said that one of the most interesting educational developments of recent years had been the introduction of the Mason method of training. He had introduced it into the preparatory school in an experimental way this year, and the results had been decidedly encouraging. He thought that it would give the boys a greater ability to express what they had read than the ordinary method of class teaching.

Mr. Ward said that he was more than ever convinced that a boy's education must not only fit him for his vocation in life, but must enable him to spend his leisure sanely and profitably, both for himself and those around him. Many educationists were feeling that, while they were sending their boys out well equipped along certain lines, they were sadly lacking in knowledge of the artistic side of life. The wider they could make a boy's culture and outlook on life, the better citizen he would be, and the better the world would be for his being in it.

In discussing the recent modifications in the regulations governing public examinations, Mr. Ward said that the number of subjects in which candidates had to pass to gain the intermediate and leaving certificates had been reduced to make the number uniform with the requirements in the other States. Previously the number here had been greater than in Perth and Melbourne. One effect of the alteration would be that candidates would be able to spend more time on the subjects for which they sat, and would probably be better grounded in them.

#### Co-operation Of Parents

The headmaster of Scotch College (Mr. N. M. G. Gratton) said that one result of the financial stringency of the past few years had been to increase the interest of parents in the education of their boys. Most of them were keenly alive to the difficulties ahead of their sons and were doing all they could to help them. His experience had been that they were only too glad to work in co-operation with the school towards that end.

Referring to the reduction in the subjects needed for a pass in the public examinations of the University, Mr. Gratton said that it was very obvious that the intermediate certificate requirements were beyond the capacity of the ordinary hard-working boy. That was shown by the fact that out of 2,009 candidates at that examination last year only 650 had gained certificates. The demands of examinations had been so great in the past that many boys had been unable to take part fully in the corporate life of the school, and so had missed an important part of their education. Examinations were over-stressed in most schools today. Nearly all a boy's school life was dominated by them. Education should proceed along sound lines and provide for a boy's full development, so that he could take his examinations in his stride.

#### Advantages Of Mason Method

The headmistress of Riverside School (Mrs. E. H. Hinde) is another advocate of the Mason method of teaching. She said that, whether as a road to the University or to other goals she was convinced that in that system they had found the way to an education that left the student with a quickened imagination, as that method made it imperative that the whole brain and not only a part of it was used. No forcing was possible, and although the group spirit was maintained by certain co-operative studies, every pupil might progress to a high standard without thought of competition with others. Arbitrary punishment and excessive homework had neither place nor necessity in its scheme of things, as a love of understanding was aroused, and knowledge for its own sake became the aim of the majority; thus a wide outlook and a ripe judgment resulted.