

KNOWING OTHERS' LANGUAGES

Governor's Plea Supported WHAT MASTERS SAY

The advocacy by the Governor (Sir Alexander Hore-Ruthven), at the St. Peter's Old Collegians' gathering on Saturday, of greater attention in British schools to modern foreign languages, has provoked interesting comment from headmasters in Melbourne, as well as in Adelaide.

"Britain's ignorance of foreign languages is a byword," he said, "and unless this is remedied quickly it will lead to national commercial disaster." The headmaster of Scotch College (Mr. N. M. G. Gratton), supporting the plea, said that in his experience there was no desire on the part of the Australian youngster to learn a foreign language. This was due partly to Australia's isolated position and linguistic self-sufficiency, and also to an inherent British disinclination for languages.

"This is a pity," Mr. Gratton said, "for knowledge of languages would give the Australian twofold advantages—cultural and in international relationships, commercial and otherwise. The Australian boy, however, as practical, and would sooner learn science and mathematics than languages, since he does not see material results in the latter. The position in England is similar, the greatest difficulty being experienced in schools there to get boys to take up languages."

In Mr. Gratton's view, Australians should be familiar with the languages of their neighbors, particularly Japanese. "It was noteworthy that the Japanese officers who came this year with the training squadron all knew something of English, which is compulsory in the schools there. A chair at the University in Spanish would probably not prove attractive, but a chair in Japanese might. In this college the boys can learn French and German, besides Latin and Greek, but here, as in other places of education, extension of the facilities would depend on the demand for them, and upon finance. We could not pay for a Japanese tutor to teach a single boy Japanese. What is missing—and what it is necessary to cultivate—is the linguistic urge."

"Modern language facilities in Adelaide University are restricted to German and French," said the registrar (Mr. F. W. Eardley) yesterday, "but there is a chair in Japanese at Sydney University. The Melbourne University curriculum includes German and French, while at Perth there are elementary courses in Spanish and Italian. Anyone can come to this University to take up French or German," "once having reached matriculation standard. A year's course would cost five guineas."

One reason why the British boy does not take readily to languages is that his own tongue is partly universal, and foreign languages are therefore of less importance to him than is English to the foreigner. Lack of linguistic skill, however, is a handicap where foreign markets are concerned. In Germany knowledge of foreign languages is widely cultivated, but the Frenchman has a reputation similar to that of the Briton—his own language is good enough.

In recent years, however, on both sides of the channel a movement for increased intermingling of young Europeans has been evident, children visiting foreign countries "au pair"—that is, they are exchanged into each other's families for varying periods. The system broadens the outlook as well as giving linguistic knowledge.

number of wellwishers of the Public Library, the Society of the Friends of the Public Library of South Australia was inaugurated. Sir David Gordon was in the chair, and was elected president of the society.

Opening the meeting, Sir David Gordon referred to strong organizations of the kind which acted as auxiliaries to important libraries in other countries, and said that the new society was not intended to take the place of the reduced Government grant nor to usurp the duties of those in charge of the library. It would endeavor to strengthen the archives of the library and support it in various ways.

Dr. R. C. Bald, proposing the formation of the society, said that at present the library could spend on books less than one-third of the amount available two years ago. This was a very serious position, for if there was one thing they could not do without, after the bare necessities of food and clothing, it was books. Owing to the high cost of books, the public had become more dependent than ever on the Public Library, but the library could not rise to the occasion.

There was no class of thoughtful people which did not turn to the Public Library for essential information. If they allowed any slackening of its services it would mean holding up the circulation of ideas. Australia would be still more isolated than ever, at a time when she must have all the intellectual benefits of civilisation. They must still depend on Europe for many of their ideas, and could not ignore what the other nine-tenths of the world was thinking.

They could not expect Governments to be sympathetic at present. The Government had, and he thought rightly, refused to give way where further demands for education were concerned, but he was abashed at the thought that it had included the Public Library in its economic measures.

There was an urgent need for maintaining the efficiency of the library, or their pride in the city and the fine standards they had set would be cast to the winds. Seconding the motion, Senator Duncan-Hughes referred to the high cost of books, and, while attributing this largely to the exchange factor, he expressed the hope that the sales and primage taxes would, before long, be withdrawn; it was a great mistake that they were ever imposed. The Public Library should be regarded as one of the first sources of education, and though times were still hard, the present, when the worst had been experienced and things appeared to have taken a turn for the better, was a good time to start the society.

Alderman McEwin referred to the great value of the library in fitting youth for the future, and said that the society would call attention to the general needs of the library and would, he thought, have a far-reaching effect on the future of the State.

Dr. F. S. Hone said that it was well that they were learning to fend for themselves, instead of taking Government help for granted, as was the case 30 years ago when the library finances declined.

Cr. A. G. Barrett stressed the commercial value of up-to-date information at the library, which might represent many thousands of pounds to the State.

The motion was adopted unanimously, together with the proposed constitution, adoption of which was moved by Mr. J. Wallace Sandford and seconded by Mrs. Carlile McDonnell, who drew attention to the excellent attendances at the library, which fell little short of those at the larger Sydney library.

The society was welcomed by the president of the Public Library Board (Mr. H. P. Moore), supported by the chairman of the finance committee (Mr. B. S. Roach).

The following officers were elected:—Vice-presidents, Sir Langdon Bonython and Messrs. J. Wallace Sandford, A. E. Clarkson, and F. J. Downer; committee, Dr. R. C. Bald, Professors W. K. Hancock, A. L. Campbell, and J. McKellar Stewart, Mesdames Carlile McDonnell and Allan Simpson, and Messrs. E. W. Benham, R. N. Finlayson, W. H. Langham, and H. R. Purnell; secretary, Mr. E. J. R. Morgan; treasurer, Mr. C. Harding Browne. The office of the society is at Trustee Building, Grenfell street.

Conservatorium Chamber Music Concert

By ALEX. BURNARD

An excellent concert of chamber works was given last night at the Elder Hall—the sixth of the present season. It was a thousand pities that there was relatively so few to hear it.

I think Ernst von Dohnanyi's string quartet in D flat is one of the finest in that literature—sincerity and conviction in every fibre of it, and the players—Peter Bornstein, Kathleen Meegan, Sylvia Whittington, and Harold Parsons—gave it a reading worthy of its inspiring level of thought.

The first movement opens with a strand of melody, from the first violin, to which reference is frequently made later. The harmonies, texture, contrasts are wielded with a master hand. At times a childlike blandness is expressed; at others it strikes the devotional note. Altogether a great movement, and a singularly happy fusion of the abstract and the atmospheric. The Scherzo is troubled and cacophonous, and the contrast is all in favor of the charming little trio sandwiched within it. This had the true Gregorian flavor, and one regretted its brevity. The third movement, which was the logical climax of the whole, incorporated both "Adagio" and "Finale" elements—a phase of broad seriousness merging into an animato of fiercely assertive rhythms. Later the original principal theme, with which the first movement opened and closed, recurs. A piece of coloring that is as original as beautiful was very lovingly spread before us: the two violins discoursing slow, ethereally high arpeggi, the viola carrying the tune, and the 'cello strumming broad chords in the manner of a guitar. Snatches of former themes are cleverly correlated, and the movement is carried to a great pitch of exaltation, to end quietly with a recapitulation of the initial motto. We will hear this magnificent quartet again before very long, I hope.

I have never before admired Miss Hilda Gill's singing, nor the work of her accompanist, Mr. George Pearce, quite so much as in the French group of last night—three of the loveliest songs that country has produced. The atmosphere, the ringing climaxes and half-lights of the first, Chausson's "Le Temps des Lilas," were fully felt by singer and player. More technically speaking, Miss Gill's chest notes were never so robust as here. One could feel most intimately, with Keats, the being half in love with easeful death, the calling him soft names, when one heard her singing of that rare piece of beauty, Duparc's "Extase," especially in the half-voice at the end: "death exquisite, death perfumed!" "La Vague et la Cloche" was equally a marvel of delineation.

Dohnanyi's Opus I, the C Minor Pf. Quintet, was the concluding number. It was interesting to compare the two works, and while the writing of the Quintet is always grateful and to the point, it hardly ever approximates the mature lyricism of the later work. Mr. Pearce was the pianist. The first movement was not favored with much contrast of tone. Its very intensity went far to defeat its own end: it was too often on the mountain tops, and seemed to be mostly at, or approaching, or quitting a fortissimo.

Typical Viennese rhythms marked the scherzo, and the Trio was charming. Everything was unerringly displayed—remarkably so, considering the earliness of the work. I thought the players were at their best here, too. The Adagio (a piece of refined romanticism) and the final Allegro both contained many interesting features, but in both these movements the tone tended to "break bounds."

Dr. Harold Davies, of the Elder Conservatorium, has issued invitations for the performance of "Faust" and "Orpheus" by the Conservatorium Opera Class at the Norwood Town Hall on Thursday and Friday, August 25 and 26, under the direction of Mr. H. Winsloe Hall, produced by Mr. James Anderson.

Mr. Bornstein Wants Music in Schools

OTHER POINTS

"THERE is no foundation whatever for the idea that Australia cannot produce great violinists," said Mr. Peter Bornstein, of the Conservatorium, today. Mr. Bornstein, one of the best-known violinists in Australia has made several gramophone records.

"Students in Australia are quite as capable of achieving greatness as students in any other part of the world," said Mr. Bornstein. "The Australian temperament is warm and alive, and though there is the same lassitude during the summer months as there is in students in Europe, this soon disappears when the cool weather comes. From close observation of students in various countries, I have come to the conclusion that climatic conditions do not affect their general work seriously."

"But there are other aspects to be considered in the production of virtuosi," Mr. Bornstein said. "There must be a natural gift. The student must possess as well the capacity for concentration, perseverance, and hard work."

WANTS MUSIC IN SCHOOLS

"Those who listen to the finished artistry of Kreisler, Szigeti, and other world-famous players are hearing the result of years of hard work, of sacrifice, of devotion to a high ideal."

"It is essential that the young student should have a good teacher. Australia is fortunate in her teachers on the whole, but greater co-operation between the educational authorities and the musical profession would do much to reveal unexpected talent in many children."

"In other parts of the world there are regular orchestral concerts for the benefit of school children, and every encouragement is given to teachers and parents alike to send their children to every musical event of value."

"There is one disadvantage for the Australian student," said Mr. Bornstein, "the distance he is from musical centres in other countries. To progress it is necessary to broaden the mind by contact with different aspects of study."

"Concertos and pieces in other forms are being constantly added to the repertoire of violinists, so there is an untold future for young Australians in this field. Give music its proper place in their life, make opportunities for them, and the whole world will hear the result in years to come."

Adelaide Lecturer for America

Under a Carnegie Corporation scholarship and with an honorary commission from the South Australian Government to enquire into teacher training in the United States and Canada, the senior lecturer at the Adelaide Teachers' College (Mr. H. M. Lushey) left for Melbourne yesterday afternoon to join the liner Mariposa today for America.

Mr. Lushey will be away for six months, during which he will visit the chief universities and teachers' colleges in the principal cities.

The Americans were evolving new methods of teaching, Mr. Lushey said. He wanted to see how the teachers were trained to cope with them. The new methods were only in their infancy. Many years would elapse before they were perfected. The present system had taken centuries to reach its present standard.

The new methods centred round the self-activity of the child. In the past the teachers had done most of the work, and had forced the pupils to learn. Under the systems now being evolved the child still did as much work, but more on its own initiative.

The teacher would be pushed more into the background, but his duties would be made more difficult as he would still have to achieve results.

"But because the methods are new does not mean that they are right," said Mr. Lushey. "I may be disappointed when I have finished my enquiries, but I am going away with an open mind."

FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY

Preserving Culture

NEW SOCIETY LAUNCHED

At a public meeting in the Town Hall last night, attended by a large

News 28-7-32

IN the Executive Council today Dr. R. S. Rogers was reappointed president of the Medical Board of South Australia.

News 27-7-32

Dr. R. H. G. Taylor has returned to Adelaide, after having done post-graduate dentistry at Toronto and Boston since 1930. He graduated at Adelaide University.

Adv. 27-7-32

Fisher Lecture Published.—"Australia's Share in International Recovery," the Joseph Fisher lecture in commerce, delivered by Mr. A. C. Davidson, general manager of the Bank of New South Wales, at Adelaide University on July 14, may now be obtained gratis in booklet form at the registrar's office at the University.