

That is not up to 8/ a day. Don't you think the school teacher of the lowest form should get as much as an unskilled labourer?—I have always pleaded for good wages. The salaries for professional teachers have been increased three times in the last five years. (Hon. A. H. Peake—The wages of workers have also been increased, so it is a question of one keeping pace with the other.)

The Chairman—Now that Mr. Peake has raised the question that State scholarships should not go to public schools, and you have approved of that by reducing the number 12 to eight, will you please come prepared to answer me on this point? You say it costs £30 to educate a child up to 14 years. Now, private people say:—"You have in your new Bill placed our schools under inspectorial supervision; we save you £30, why should we not be refunded some portion of that amount, and have an equal claim to the scholarships with the schools under your control?" That view needs a settlement. Also in reply to Mr. Peake, that, if bound to give £50,000 (an imaginary sum) for University or secondary education, you would give it to the secondary; I wish to know, had that money been spent on the University education 10 years ago, would you not have had an abundance of educated men to go as teachers? Will you please be prepared with some information on these points by the next meeting of the commission.

The commission adjourned to a day to be fixed.

Why cannot other schools give similar certificates to those obtained from the University?—The University examination is common ground on which the children from all schools may meet. If certificates were accepted from the public schools under Government control the same thing would have to apply to those schools under sectarian control.

What does it cost to educate the average child up to the age of 14?—Approximately, about £30 for the tuition alone. What is the extent of the demand for High School education?—The movement is new, and it is growing in favor. The attendances are increasing rapidly, and we shall need bigger buildings.

How do the facilities for secondary education offered to South Australian children compare with those offered elsewhere?—Five years ago the answer would have been that Australia was doing nothing in comparison with Europe and America. In the last five years, however, there has been a complete revolution in education in Australia. In this State we have made a beginning with secondary education, which is gradually being extended. In Victoria it has not proceeded quite so far as in South Australia, but Victoria has just passed an Act which will enable it to make very rapid strides. New South Wales is now about to make a big jump in the direction of giving increased facilities. In Queensland the grammar schools, which were only subsidised up till recently, are to be brought under State control and will become State secondary schools. A similar movement is taking place in Western Australia. In South Australia the secondary schools are free, and they will be free in New South Wales. That is not so in Europe, but the high schools of America are free.

How does the Adelaide High School compare with similar schools elsewhere?—I think it compares well with any similar institution in Australia.

I am glad to hear that. During the period from 1901-2 to 1907-8, the expenditure on education in South Australia only increased from £210,441 to £210,712, whereas in the other States and New Zealand the advances have run into thousands of pounds—New Zealand started secondary education a long time ago, and the Dominion has made great progress. The Minister of Education told me when he visited New Zealand that Parliament would grant any sum asked for education.

What can this State do to bridge the gap more effectively between the primary school and the University?—First improve the High Schools system in the country. These are the training-grounds for the University and other advanced educational institutions, and it is a good thing to have the pupils trained as near their homes as possible. Secondly, have a good scholarship system to help those unable otherwise to reach the District High Schools.

Would you make the present scholarship system more liberal?—I would advise increasing both the number and the value of the scholarships.

The witness said he had considered the question of establishing a State residential college, both from the point of view of the teacher and the pupil, and the responsibility would be so great that personally he would rather not undertake it. He was alive to the advantages of ideal residential conditions but many of the High School students resided with relations and friends. The chief disadvantage so far in regard to the high schools had been the difficulty in obtaining suitable teaching staffs. The department, however, was now getting a fair supply of teachers, and those best suited for secondary education work were being selected each year. The substantial salaries offered by the Defence authorities had proved a strong attraction to some of the young men, who had left the department. Every State in the Commonwealth was as badly off for teachers as South Australia. Young men and women did not care to go to the small schools in the outlying districts.

The Chairman—And I do not blame them.

In reply to Mr. Styles, the witness said he had tried to observe the practice of giving the young teachers in the department the best opportunities. Inspector Jordan, who had recently been appointed, was an outsider, but his qualifications were such that he appeared to be eminently suited for the work of inspecting the high schools. As the number of high schools at present was limited Mr. Jordan's time would be partly occupied by other inspectional work. As the high school system was extended the inspectorial staff would need to be increased.

Mr. Peake—What is the ideal of a University? Do you consider it a kind of glorified college?—By no means. My idea of a University is that its main purpose is for research and finding out the truth, and for passing on the results to those desirous of entering upon particular walks of life.

Then it is much higher than the college?—Yes. In a country like this we cannot organize our educational forces as is done in Great Britain and Germany.

There they have so many students that there are different schools to meet varying requirements, whereas in South Australia, we have to make one University meet a number of needs.

Do you regard the University as an institution for preparation for special work?—Very largely so.

And we should regard our High Schools and colleges as preparatory schools for the University?—Yes.

Then every student would require full preparation before going on to the University?—Yes.

Supposing the doors of the University were opened so wide that every student could go in, would that be very much advantage? Do you think every boy and girl should go to the University to finish off his or her education?—I think there will always be a comparatively small proportion ready to go on. I would like to see the opportunity for those able and willing to go into the University, but I think the proportion of those fitted for that higher training is very much smaller than many people imagine.

Supposing the Government had £50,000 to spend either on University education or on an extension of secondary education under the department, which would be the more valuable to the State and the cause of education generally? I don't want to puzzle you—I'm not puzzled. I am a member of the council of the University. (Laughter.)

The Chairman—Dual positions again.

Mr. Peake—I am speaking to you simply as an education specialist.

The Witness—I do not think I would ask for the £50,000 for either purpose straight out, but perhaps the larger portion should go to secondary education.

But for the general uplifting of humanity or of school children generally, which would do the greater good?—Of course I should favor the secondary schools. We must prepare the students for the University.

And the whole ground of preparation for the University is not yet covered?—Quite so.

What provision is made for children in primary schools to attend the denominational secondary schools?—There are eight scholarships, which take the winners to any school nominated by them.

Do you think it is within the power of your department to set up a standard and prepare students for it which would meet the requirements of those desirous of entering the State and Federal Civil Services?—Undoubtedly that could be done.

It would simply be a matter of the various departments accepting your certificates?—Yes.

Do you consider the University of value as an examining body?—Yes. It may be contended that these examinations dominate too much the work of the schools, but there is a good deal to be said on both sides.

Has the allowance of £25 hitherto made to primary school students as a bursary been regarded in the light of an adequate allowance or only as an assistance?—As an assistance only. I think provision should be made so that special cases may be dealt with on a more generous scale.

What are special cases?—Where the parents cannot afford to pay anything.

Would that not open up the question of invidious distinctions?—I think the £25 should be increased to £35 per annum and a clause inserted that in special circumstances the Minister may increase the amount to a certain maximum. The Liverpool Corporation gives £10,000 a year to its University, and gives another £1,000 a year which is earmarked for poor students. The Vice-Chancellor, without anybody else knowing about it, makes it possible for a poor student to take his course.

Do you think the number of bursaries should be increased?—I was much disappointed that last year only four of the forty High School bursaries were awarded. I am not prepared to explain that at present.

Will you look that up? It is very important.—I have determined to write a letter to the parents.

This is a crucial point. We are assuming that there are not sufficient scholarships. If those already provided are not availed of it seems to suggest either that they are not valued or they entail too much incidental expense?—It is not so crucial as it may appear. This is the first year they have been tried, and, although we advertised them in the "Education Gazette" and the "Children's Hour," perhaps they were not advertised quite sufficiently.

Do you think that perhaps it is because there is not sufficient appreciation of this bridge to secondary education?—It is a very important matter, and I am hoping it is, because it is new.

Do you find a disinclination on the part of young men to enter the teaching service?—No; the number has been increasing.

Is there any male teacher of the age of 21 years receiving less than 8/ per day?—I do not think there are any getting under £100 a year.

That is not 8/ per day. We give our most unskilled laborers in the Government service £2 per week. Do you not think that even the lowest class of school teacher should be paid as much as the unskilled laborer?—I have always advocated that.

The Chairman said some of the questions raised by Mr. Peake were of a crucial nature, and he hoped Mr. Williams would, when called before the Commission at a later stage, come prepared to answer them fully.

The Commission adjourned.

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HIGHER EDUCATION.

THE UNIVERSITY COMMISSION,

EVIDENCE BY DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION.

The first meeting of the University Commission for the taking of evidence was held at Parliament House on Friday. There were present Mr. T. Ryan (chairman), the Hon. A. H. Peake and A. W. Styles, and Mr. T. Green.

Mr. A. Williams, Director of Education and a member of the Council of the University, was examined.

The Chairman—Has it always been considered that the Director of Education is entitled to a position on the University Council?

The Witness—I was not taken into the confidence of the council at all on the matter when I was appointed. I think there was a feeling on the council that the Education Department should be represented.

This Commission was formed for the purpose of enquiring into and trying to devise some system by which the facilities for higher education will be extended to deserving students to a very much greater extent than exists at present. What facilities are there in the Education Department to enable deserving students to pass from the public schools to the University?—The work I have tried to do more than any other has been to provide means by which able and industrious boys and girls might be enabled to pass on to the School of Mines, the Agricultural College, or the University.

What is being done at present to bridge the gap between the primary school and the University?—There are the Adelaide High School and the District High Schools in various parts of the State. To enable promising students in outlying districts to get the advantage of a High School education the Government annually provided 40 scholarships, worth £25 per annum, tenable for three years.

Why should children have about 10 years' schooling in order to pass the senior examination at the University, when, perhaps, only one student out of every 10 goes on to the University?—There are other factors to be considered. All boys and girls do not possess the brains required for University subjects.

Then is there any special advantage in having a senior certificate from the University?—Yes. Here it takes the place of such a thing as the leaving certificates given by the Scotch Education Department, which are very valuable when the student applies for a situation. I think parents here regard the senior certificate as a sort of guarantee of a good general education.

Cannot the work of the High School be extended so as to give students certificates which would be equally valuable?—That opens up a big question. The people who are giving the positions must fix the qualification.

Would you have to alter the curriculum of the High Schools very much to enable you to give students a certificate equal to the University senior?—I have no doubt that it could be done.