

THE EDUCATION BILL.

Mr. Coneybeer should be cordially complimented on the matter and tone of his speech in moving the second reading of the Education Bill in the Assembly. In ably presenting a powerful case on behalf of the main provisions of the measure, he had the advantage of addressing a sympathetic audience. Every legislator cheerfully recognises that the value of a citizen to the State depends largely upon the degree of his or her intellectual enlightenment and the training given to the personal character in the schools. Having assumed the responsibility of imparting primary instruction, the State is bound to discharge the duty efficiently, and to adopt precautions to prevent avoidable abuse or waste of its efforts. The experiences of other advanced countries indicate the wisdom, from economic and moral standpoints, of providing facilities for the easy acquisition of broader and more useful knowledge than that which enables a child to pass the compulsory standard. The modern achievements of Switzerland, Germany, and Denmark demonstrate that the expenditure of State revenue on higher and technical instruction is a valuable reproductive investment. It is comparable with "casting bread on the waters," which shall be seen again after many days. The security, good government, and happiness of the State demand that the claims of the rising race to a good working mental equipment shall be properly satisfied. An ancient classical author uttered a truth which is generally applicable in all ages:—"Men derive no greater advantage from a liberal education than that it tends to soften and polish their natures by improving their reasoning faculties and training their habits, thus producing evenness of temper, and banishing all extremes." The example of Denmark in particular strikingly shows that the intellectual quickening of a nation will have the most far-reaching and beneficial effects upon the occupations and industries of its people. It will stimulate their energies and enterprise, direct them into useful and remunerative channels, and add zest and interest to life. The Danes have made their mark as dairy farmers chiefly because of the liberal education they receive.

The Minister carefully emphasized the fact that the new proposals do not lessen the obligations of parents. The earliest and strongest impressions—impressions which give lifelong bias to character—are formed in the home, and the State cannot undertake to relieve parents of the solemn duty of attending to the religious and ethical training of their children. Yet the teaching given may be justly regarded as helpful to the agencies which are specially concerned in the children's spiritual welfare. The existence of a righteous and benevolent Creator, to whom worship and obedience are due, is assumed, and the Christian virtues are extolled. By making provision for the cultivation and training of youthful minds and physical capacities during the critical period of adolescence the State will perform practical and humane service, for which it should be commended. It will proclaim the "gospel of work" and, while saving boys and girls from indolent habits or monotonous drudgery,

impress them with the seriousness of living and the value of their faculties. The Government proposes to stop short of making education compulsory after the age of 14 years; but what if the "continuation classes" held in the evenings should be poorly attended? The taxpayers ought to have the satisfaction of knowing that the outlay on such institutions is not thrown away. The principle of local option on the subject may meet the difficulty, but the indifference of parents or local authorities might in certain cases stultify the Education Department's good work. Probably the need will be found for the exercise eventually of more extended powers than the Bill provides. In this respect the Government does not err on the side of boldness. Its attitude towards the Adelaide School of Mines and Industries is peculiarly weak and halting, as well as illogical and inconsistent. Mr. Coneybeer maintains that this institution "undoubtedly will have to be taken over, because it is a national work of the State," and yet he has omitted a provision to this effect from a measure ostensibly consolidating and complete. No wonder that the objection raised upon the point by the Leader of the Opposition evoked a chorus of approving ejaculations.

The Bill embodies Mr. Williams's excellent idea of "a system of education beginning with thoroughly efficient primary schools, dovetailing into higher primary and secondary schools, which prepare their pupils for the technical institutions and the University." Details of the scheme will require to be worked out and applied by a master mind. Mr. Coneybeer made no reference to the financial aspect of the subject, or to the difficulty of securing and equipping the needful new staff of instructors. Obviously, the project will involve heavy and continuous expenditure, which will call for the exercise of the utmost prudence in order to secure the best results; and the training and selection of teachers will require great circumspection. In his allusions to technical instruction, the Minister—possibly through the difficulty of compressing all forms of the subject into a single address—failed to indicate the supreme importance of our agricultural and pastoral industries. South Australia must not at this stage make the mistake of creating a population of artisans, at the expense of the development of her vast unutilized landed inheritance. Instruction in agriculture in the secondary schools should be made readily available to town dwellers, who may thus be induced to enter callings which are wholly beneficial to the State. In the technical schools the girls ought to be taught domestic economy and the arts which will assist them to become thrifty housekeepers and happy helpmates. The Bill is designed to effect most important reforms, and it ought to be most carefully studied by the people as well as by the Parliament.

UNIVERSITY COUNCIL.

November 4. Present—The Vice-Chancellor, Dr. Emis, Rev. Dr. Jeffries, Dr. Rennie, Mr. Talbot Smith, Mr. Murray, Mr. Williams, and Professor Mitchell. The council fixed the beginning and ending of terms for 1911 as under:—First term begins March 14; ends May 19. Second term begins June 5; ends August 18. Third term begins September 4; ends December 12. On the recommendation of the council, sub-committee, and the education committee, it was resolved that in future the academical year of the Elder Conservatorium shall consist of four terms, instead of three, as hitherto, and that there shall be one grade only. In order to give effect to this recommendation the regulations were amended for submission to the Senate. On the recommendation of the Faculty of Science, Professor Lyle, Professor Pollock, and Professor Osborne were appointed examiners of theses submitted for the degree of Doctor of Science. Mr. W. J. Colebatch, B.Sc., was appointed examiner for a thesis submitted in connection with the agricultural course of the B.Sc. degree.

Professor Chapman, Dean of the Faculty of Science, wrote reporting that at the invitation of the Acting-Principal of the Roseworthy Agricultural College, the members of the Faculty had paid an official visit to the college on October 26. The members of the Faculty expressed their gratification at the efficient laboratories, and at the evidence of experimental work carried on in several directions.

A report from Mr. W. A. Laver, of Melbourne, in regard to the public examinations in practice of music recently held by him and Professor Emis in country centres in South Australia was received.

Mr. W. Noel Benson, B.Sc., of Sydney, wrote asking the council to accept a relief map of the Mount Lotty Ranges. It was resolved to thank Mr. Benson for his valuable presentation.

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—Conservatorium Orchestra.—

Popular vote would give the success of the season to Monday night's concert in the Conservatorium. It was the turn of Mr. Heinicke's orchestral forces to provide the programme. The large gathering included His Excellency the Governor and Lady Bosanquet, and a party of Continental woodbuyers. Under his baton the conductor had a wide field. The string section (led by Miss Sylvia Whittington) was specially numerous, and for that reason, probably, the tone was not at first passing pure. Time, too, went astray, but only for part of the journey, and it is fair to say that unison and vigour of attack made ample amends. Beethoven's "Leonora" overture was the introductory work. An illuminating footnote intimated that:—"Beethoven, possibly from his fastidiousness with regard to a libretto, wrote but one opera, "Fidelio," which was first produced in Vienna in November, 1805. The overture played on that date was that known as "Leonora No. 2," but between the period of its production and the following March, when the opera was again produced, the composer practically rewrote the overture, both enlarging and compressing its subject matter until he had brought it up to his own ideal. This form of the composition is known as "Leonora No. 3," and exhibits a greater breadth and grandeur than the preceding work. The work throughout is a wonderful example of beauty and power, from its colossal opening to the very speed of its close, and it was a compliment to the conductor for the brilliant manner of its presentation. Then followed the delightful entracte and valse from the "Coppelia" ballet of Leo Delibes. This fragment holds within its bars examples of all the grace, intoxicating sparkle and felicity of orchestration with which the name of the Frenchman is synonymous, and it was received with fervour. Then came some more of the sparkle of France, mixed with the abandon of Spain—Massenet's "Le Cid" ballet. It comprised the "Aragonaise," "aubade," and the "Navarraise." It abounded in national colouring and electrified its hearers with its staccato chromatic chords and reckless changes of tempo. A stormy suit for repetition had the effect of reversing a wise rule, and the last portions were given again. Lastly the orchestra played the "Lannhauser" march. With orchestral accompaniment Miss Gladys Taylor, A.M.U.A., achieved success in her rendition of the rondo from Beethoven's Concerto in C minor, op. 37. Vocal variety was lent by two young women of astounding gifts. Miss Kathleen O'Dea made a favourable debut last season, and under the tuition of Mr. Winsloe Hall she has distinctly developed. Her literally "big" voice is of mezzo quality, although wide in range. She sang Goring Thomas's "A summer night," and revealed all her promise in the ringing high notes. Further sensible cultivation will mean an acquisition to South Australia's ranks of song birds. The same might be repeated with even more confidence concerning Miss Gladys Cilento, a young northerner, whose debut was a triumph. Accompanied by Mr. Bevan, she sang Gounod's "Entreat me not to leave thee." Her voice revealed itself a superb contralto—one that placed her immediately in the front rank, even as a student with much to learn. It possessed the effortless characteristics of organ notes, with singularly sweet production of certain vowels. It is decidedly a voice for public attention.