

The Registry
February 10, 1915.

EDUCATION.

From Thomas Ryan, Chairman Education Commission.—“The Minister’s message to the School Teachers’ Union must have disgusted all engaged in facing the problems confronting the extension of education; but surely no one more so than his predecessor in office, the Hon. A. H. Peake. The admission from the Benjamin of his team that previous Ministers had failed to put right those defects calling for redress which opponents to the Government have often urged against Liberal administration of the Education Department; but now at last from the mouth of a Liberal—a very mellow one, it must be admitted—has condemnation been pronounced, and no doubt the Liberal Premier who sat in command of the Education Office for the last three years will hail with mixed feelings the coming of this modern Daniel to judgment. Before perusing too closely this latest contribution bearing on the educational problem, many will ask, Why was this interest so long delayed?—for we know that for the last three years this sapient Minister enjoyed the privileges of legislative authority, and Hansard records that during these three years he asked on one occasion when the report on the Education Commission would come along? And on another occasion some other trifling question; but his voice was not further heard, and not one finger did he lift towards securing the adoption of the Education Commission’s recommendations. Yet this report is the only remedy for the removal of these education excrescences which brought forth the outpouring of his soul, and when it is remembered that with his assistance the report could have been adopted, and conditions making for muddledom in the Education Office today might have been remedied, we ask again—Why did Mr. Parsons wait until Parliament had closed to show that awakened interest of his in the school life of the community, that we read of under the heading of “A Legislator at School,” describing in the main his visit to a school presided over by a teacher who happens to be at the same time the President of the union who conveyed the congratulations of his body (it is reported) to the modern Minister? It is well for us that this style of congratulation was thought of, for has it not given us the Minister’s very own form of reply in a style which would never have come from any of his colleagues, and never did come from any previous occupant of his office. Yes, it was his very own; for, lest any could be so dense as to think these noble aspirations were common to his Ministerial colleagues, or even to his comrades in the campaign (if he has any), or much less to the rapidly diminishing Liberal lump, of which he is the self-accredited leaven, the message sets the fact beyond doubt. Thus the type boxes containing the letter ‘T’ were emptied, and so that they might be brought forth in full array in this famous message to be bracketed in the future as ‘Docket I. author, Hon. Herbert Angus Parsons,’ the sentences were marshalled—‘I am glad to receive you,’ ‘I am not opposed to unions,’ ‘I belong to a union,’ ‘I cannot immediately do all the teachers know I want to do for them, and what in normal times should be done.’ Are you listening, Mr. Peake? ‘What should be done in normal times.’ But then let us in justice remember that Mr. Peake did not have three years of slumber, so he was not deigned to see the vision of Benjamin, and thus the condemnation of Mr. Parsons on the education administration—‘Things left undone which in normal times—those days when you were there, Mr. Peake—should have been done.’ Where was Mr. Parsons in these normal times? We know he drew his Parliamentary salary. Still, be not dismayed—Benjamin still speaks—‘I say this to our teachers;’ ‘I shall watch their work;’ ‘I am at the head of this great Department of Education;’ ‘I want the teachers to realize their interests are mine;’ ‘I know their work is exacting;’ ‘I hope to remove unnecessary excrescences;’ ‘I start with the impression that the service is not overmanned, and in some respects underpaid;’ ‘I shall do everything possible to improve conditions;’ ‘I shall encourage efficiency;’ ‘I shall welcome suggestions from the teachers for the improvement of the service;’ ‘I shall be careful to remember this.’ Then, alas! the typebox was emptied; nothing remained but to sub-

strute another word. Other Ministers have used 'ours' or 'heir,' or 'the wishes of Parliament;' but then they were not the Hon. Herbert Angus Parsons, with his love of 'I's' and 'my.' Hence 'my' is used to convey his Ministerial blessing. What vague generalities and frothy nonsense from him who sat in idleness, and who, when the opportunities for doing something were within his reach, allowed these to pass without as much as one word. If the new Minister is in earnest in his statement that he is anxious to improve the education system in this State so that the taxpayers may be guaranteed that measure of efficiency which the expenditure demands, let him pledge such of the Liberal Party who may find a place in the new Parliament to the report of the Education Commission, consisting of representatives of all parties then in the House, and approved of by every member of that commission. But, as in his slumbers when in Parliament he has not become familiar with them, here are some of the reforms suggested, dealing as they do with—Cost of education, control of the education system, primary education, kindergarten, compulsory attendance, home lessons, length of the school day, Teachers' Classification Board, transfer of teachers, curriculum board, Teachers' Training College, size of classes, long leave of absence, equipment of schools, inspection of schools, inspection of private schools, abolition of school boards of advice, education in reformatories, mentally defective children in schools, itinerant teachers, physical culture, conduct of children, sex physiology, school buildings, supervision of secondary education, inspection of State colleges and high schools, status of high school teachers, agricultural education, University education, University buildings, more land for the University and School of Mines and Public Library, constitution of the University council, council of public education, certificates, State control and organization of the technical branch, the University and technical education, manual work in the primary schools, compulsory attendance of apprentices at technical schools during working hours. Lest these reforms, which would give to the children of South Australia some of the advantages the children of the other States enjoy, be not farreaching enough for the awakened Minister he may tempt his party to support the educational ideals of the United Labour Party of South Australia, which are:—Compulsory age of attendance to be raised from 13 to 14 years, extension of free education to all citizens of the State up to and inclusive of universities, school-books and requirements for school children to be free. Our reasons for demanding these are that we hold 'it is an inborn right of all in this country, if they are worthy of the highest education a country can give, to get that education free'; for we have learned—'Since the manual labour classes are four or five times as numerous as all other classes put together, it is not unlikely that more than half the best natural genius born into the country belongs to them, and of this a great part is fruitless for want of opportunity. There is no extravagance more prejudicial to the growth of national wealth than wasteful negligence which allows genius that happens to be born of lowly parentage to expend itself in lowly work.' Until this is generally realized we will still be groping in the muddledom we are at present, and nothing short of the recommendations outlined can supply South Australia's greatest need, a national conception of education."

The Advertiser
February 11th 1915.

MAWSON EXPEDITION.

MEDALS AWARDED TO MEMBERS.

LONDON, February 9.

The King has awarded to Sir Douglas Mawson and to each of the members of his expedition the Polar exploration medal.

The Daily Herald
February 10th 1915

THE AWAKENING OF MR. PARSONS

A DANIEL COME TO JUDGMENT

BY THOMAS RYAN (CHAIRMAN OF THE EDUCATION COMMISSION).

The Minister's message to the School Teachers' Union which was delivered to the president on the occasion of his gratulation to Mr. Parsons on his elevation to office disgusted all who were engaged in facing the problems confronting the extension of education, but surely none more than his predecessor in office, the Hon. A. H. Peake (Premier and Minister of Education).

The admission from the Benjamin of his team that previous Ministers had failed to put right those defects calling for redress—which opponents have often urged against the Liberal administration of the Education Department—is significant. At last from the mouth of a Liberal, a very mellow one, it must be admitted, has condemnation been pronounced, and no doubt the Liberal Premier who sat in command of the Education Office for the past three years will hail with mixed feelings the coming of this modern Daniel to judgment.

Why So Long Delayed?

Before perusing too closely this the latest contribution bearing on the educational problem, many will ask—"Why was this interest so long delayed? For we know that for the past three years this sapient Minister enjoyed the privileges of legislative authority. During those three years he asked on one occasion when the report on the Education Commission would come along, and on some other trifling question on another, but his voice was not further heard, and not one finger did he lift towards securing the adoption of the Education Commission's recommendations.

Yet in this report is the only remedy for the removal of these education excrescences which brought forth the outpouring of his soul, and when it is remembered that with his assistance the report could have been adopted, and conditions making for muddledom in the Education Office to-day might have been remedied, we ask again—"Why did Mr. Parsons wait until Parliament had closed to show that awakened interest of his in the school life of the community that we read of under the heading of 'A Legislator at School,' describing in the main his visit to a school presided over by a teacher who happens to be at the same time the president of the union who conveyed congratulations of his body to the modern Minister?"

"His Very Own."

It is well for us that this style of congratulation was thought of, for has it not given us the Minister's very own form of reply—his very own, in a reply that would never have come from any of his colleagues, and never did come from any previous occupant of his office? Yes; it was his very own, for lest any could be so dense as to think these noble aspirations were common to his Ministerial colleagues, or even to his comrades in the campaign (that is, if he has any), or much less to the rapidly diminishing Liberal lump of which he is the self-accredited leaven, the message sets beyond doubt. Thus the type boxes containing letter I's were emptied, and brought forth in full array in this famous message to be bracketed in the future as "Docket I"—and how the sentences were marshalled—

"I am glad to receive you."

"I am not opposed to unions."

"I belong to a union."

"I cannot immediately do all the teachers know

"I want to do for them,

"And what in normal times should be done."