

Ref. 12.6.19

DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION.

From "PELAGIUS"—"Altera Pars" asks "Pelagus" to disclose his identity while he withholds his own. I cannot find any one of that designation in the directory, and therefore some slight inconsistency attends the demand. "Pelagus" may have sufficient reason for maintaining his incognito. However, his identity is of no consequence to the public. It has no bearing on the point at issue. In discussing a question of such importance the personal factor can well be eliminated. What counts is the merit or demerit of his argument. "Pelagus" is also charged with the crime of youthfulness. This, I believe, was the crime that Walpole laid to the charge of William Pitt. It is a fault for which a man is not responsible, and which the fight of the years will remedy. "A. P." might recollect, too, that great truths have been revealed to "babes and sucklings" which have been denied to the wise and prudent. He also seems to think that it is quite permissible, and in accordance with the discipline of the service, for subordinates to dictate to the authorities who shall be set to rule over them. Perhaps he is right, but it seems to bear a strong affinity to the Bolshevik practice of soldiers choosing their own officers, or students electing their own professors. "A. P." lays stress on the fact that the present rulers of the Education Department "have borne the heat and burden of the day." Admitting that, have they not received ample remuneration for such services as they have rendered, and had ample opportunity to provide for their old age? A feeling is growing among a class of public servants that the public service is their private patrimony, and should be administered for their personal benefit and that of their especial friends. It cannot be too strongly insisted that the public services were created for the commonweal, and not in the private interest of individuals. Mere length of service should not constitute any claim to promotion. The inefficiency of the present administration is accepted as established by most of your correspondents. The question, therefore, arises whether mere personal considerations should count as more than dust in the balance when weighed against the vital interests of the children and the welfare of the State. The crying need for radical reform in the administration of our educational system should outweigh every other contention. If the authorities are fully seized of the fact that the future of our people is inextricably bound up with the adequate training of our children, they will spare no pains to secure the most capable man for a post of such far reaching consequence, and will allow no private or personal consideration to influence their decision. No reform in machinery, no care in organization, can compensate for the lack of the informing spirit which would infuse new life into the teaching, and which alone can make progress in the right direction possible. The recommendations set out in the resolution of the central council of the Workers' Educational Association point clearly to the steps that should be taken by the authorities in the discharge of their highly important duty.

From "A MEMBER OF THE L.W.E.A."—"Not a Mariouette" was a bit hasty in pronouncing judgment on the Liberal Women's Educational Association. I was at the meeting, and nothing was said which in any way reflected on the ability of the men in South Australia, or compared them with those of other States; and our resolutions were quite within our rights. One of our number stipulated that the Director of Education should not be required to see to all the petty details of furniture, drains, &c., but should devote his whole time to the directing of education alone. Perhaps education in South Australia has gone backward—not in spite of, but because of, the Advisory Council of Education; and naturally so, when you bear of teachers after six months' training being appointed, and placed in more highly paid positions than those who have been teaching for years. A council who will permit this is not a fit body to choose our Director of Education. I suggest that an advertisement be inserted in American papers asking for applications for this position, as the American system is, I believe, the most up to date in the world. But, anyway, whoever is chosen should be allowed a perfectly free hand to remodel the whole system.

Admission 12.6.19.

PROFESSOR NAYLOR AND THE MUSEUM.

It was the desire of Professor Darnley Naylor, in delivering his public lecture on Wednesday evening upon "The Races and Languages of Europe," to explain better the cephalic index of the Nordic, Alpine, and Mediterranean groups of the Neolithic age by using skulls from the Adelaide Museum collection. On a previous occasion, when he spoke on the same subject, skulls for the purpose were made available to him, he said, through the courtesy of the late Sir Edward Stirling.

In the present instance, however, he was not able to procure them, possibly owing to some misapprehension or mistake. It was the duty of the Museum authorities to take every care of the valuable things they had in their charge, but surely an exception could be made when the request came from a member of the University staff. Obviously people who knew little about some of the objects in the Museum should help to make them a little more interesting to the public. It was surely the duty of the authorities, as it should be a pleasure for them, to do that. However, the members of the public who had come to listen to his address were the losers, and not he. Sir William Sowden, who was present, afterwards stated:—"I am president of the board, and I knew nothing about the loan or the non-loan of the skulls until it was mentioned here to-night. There must be, as Professor Naylor kindly assumes, some misunderstanding, as the board is always foremost in assisting educational matters." Professor Naylor, in further commenting upon the incident, said:—"I do not believe it was anything but a mistake. An exception should always be made in the case of the University. What is the use of appointing a professor if he cannot be trusted with the best things you have in the Museum? It is not for the sake of the University, but in the interests of the public, that I feel it ought to have been done. I trust that the board will be not only willing, but eager, to do what I have suggested." Professor Naylor's remarks were received with much applause by the audience.

Ref. 11.6.19.

DIRECTORSHIP OF EDUCATION.

It is understood that it is the intention of the Government to call for applications for the vacant position of Director of Education in the other States, also, possibly, outside of Australia. The Premier (Hon. A. H. Peake) was asked on Tuesday whether any decision had been reached, but his reply was merely that the matter was under consideration. Cabinet has been giving close attention to all aspects of the appointment, and there seems to be a strong probability now that an important change may be made in the rank, duties, and salary attaching to the position. Local applications were called recently, and some were received, but, as The Register pointed out at the time, this action did not necessarily mean that the new director would be selected from among them. The reported decision of the Government to seek a wider field of choice is accepted as an indication that the successor to Mr. M. M. Maughan, B.A., will be an imported expert with a thorough knowledge of modern systems of education. It is hoped no doubt by this course to reorganize the department in material directions, and introduce the latest methods. The Government may be found to be favourable to making the duties of the new officer conform more to the title of his position—that of Director of Education—than has been the case in the past when trivial routine matters have occupied his attention, to the exclusion of vital affairs. It is felt that the director ought to direct in the real sense of the term, and not have to concern himself with questions that should be disposed of by subordinates. With a larger salary, proper functions, and stability of appointment, there appears to be a good opportunity at present, if the selection is not limited even to Australia, of securing a strong, capable, and well-equipped leader of the department.

Ad. 13.6.19.

PROFESSOR NAYLOR AND THE MUSEUM.

Sir William Sowden, the president of the Public Library Board, writes:—"It has been represented to me that an erroneous impression, prejudicial to Mr. E. R. Waite, F.L.S., the present Director of the Museum, may be caused by a remark of Professor Darnley Naylor in his lecture on Wednesday night:—"The last time I lectured on this subject I was able, through the courtesy of the late Sir Edward Stirling, to show three skulls from the national collection; but on this occasion the opportunity has been denied to me." From this has been drawn the inference that Mr. Waite, Sir Edward Stirling's successor, had declined to lend the skulls; but that gentleman had nothing whatever to do with the matter, which is subject to a board regulation."

Admission 13.6.19.

PERSONAL.

Heartly congratulations were extended to Sir Joseph Verco at a meeting of the Royal Society on Thursday evening upon the honor recently bestowed on him. Professor Rennie said their president became a member of the society in 1878, and at intervals since then he had contributed papers on his favorite subject, conchology. These had not been the papers of a mere collector of shells as a matter of curiosity, but were always distinguished by scientific investigation. Sir Joseph Verco went beyond the mere description of shells, and had cleared up in many cases discrepancies which had occurred in existing records. The value of the proceedings of the society had been considerably enhanced by his labors. In 1903 he was made president for the first time, and he had continued to hold that office ever since, showing the same thoroughness and scrupulous care in the fulfilment of his duties as he had the reputation of doing in all his work. The members had always had complete confidence in him. Sir Joseph Verco had given the society valuable financial help. In 1904 he offered £1,000 if two others would give a similar sum. In 1908 he gave £1,000, and induced the late Mr. T. Scarfe to give a like amount. He also approached the late Mr. R. Barr Smith, with the result that on his death the society benefited by another £1,000. When the funds at the society's disposal for binding proved inadequate Sir Joseph Verco gave £200. Their library had been much enriched by these gifts, and had been made a great deal more accessible to the members. They were under a deep debt of gratitude for all that he had done. People sometimes wondered why honors had been bestowed on certain persons, but in the case of Dr. Verco no one had wondered. He had been known as an honorable man, a true physician of high standing, and a great benefactor to the community. Dr. R. S. Rogers, in seconding the vote of congratulation, said Sir Joseph Verco was a South Australian, and they were all proud of him. The president, in responding, recalled how the first paper contributed by him to the proceedings of the society nearly 41 years ago, entitled "The statistics of consumption in South Australia," was written in spare time while he was waiting for patients to consult him. On very many days he had had to wait in vain. The British Medical Association, the University of Adelaide, and the Royal Society must be held responsible for his obtaining a knighthood, as it was through their appreciation that the honor had been conferred. The greater part of his life had been spent in his professional work, and probably the greater part of the explanation of the honor came through his medical life, but he had had a recreation, and it was that which had largely brought him into relationship with the Royal Society.

Ref. 14.6.19.

—Director of Education.—

Referring to the selection of a new Director of Education, the Premier said Mr. Maughan was entitled to sympathy through having to resign owing to illness. There were many excellent men in the department, and he did not wish to discount their abilities, but a new conception of education was wanted. The Government proposed to invite applications throughout the Commonwealth for a Director, at a salary of £1,000 a year. At the same time it was proposed to separate many of the details and duties which formerly had been carried out by the Director, assisted by the present Acting Director (Mr. Charlton). The new arrangement would enable the Director to devote most of his time to matters purely educational, without having so much of his time frittered away in considering details regarding buildings, furniture, and repairs. The Government had come to the conclusion, and he believed that the view would be supported by a large body of public opinion, that the Education Department had got into a groove. There was a time in the days of Mr. Hartley when this State led in education, but that was not the case to-day, and in some respects they were very much behind the other States.

SCHOOL OF MINES.

MORE ROOM WANTED.

On Thursday morning Major Smeaton, M.P., introduced a deputation to the Minister of Education with a request for extra accommodation at the South Australian School of Mines and Industries. Major Smeaton apologized for the absence of the President of the Council (Sir Langdon Bonython), who was out of the State. The deputation comprised Mr. J. A. V. Brown, Professor Chapman, Hon. D. M. Charleston, Mr. George Jeffrey, and the principal (Mr. F. W. Reid).

The deputation said that the School of Mines had been cramped for room for some time, and it was essential that further accommodation should be provided if the work of the institution was to be carried out properly. The school was rapidly growing in value, and its needs were increasing accordingly. The whole system of the building was badly arranged, and there was no room for properly dealing with the staff. The whole of the accommodation should be revised and rearranged. The University was very cramped, as were the other institutions on North terrace. The deputation was of the opinion that each of the institutions should be asked to state what its future developments were likely to be, and a committee appointed from those institutions to draw up some scheme of allocation. If each of the institutions knew what accommodation was likely to be available they could settle on some definite scheme of operations for the future. The North Terrace Reserves Commission, in their first progress report had recommended that:—"The Jubilee Oval be retained for present purposes, and that the Jubilee Exhibition Building be kept intact until such time as provision of an adequate kind is made for the accommodation of public gatherings; but that that portion of the grounds, from a line drawn in continuation of the western boundary of the land on which the School of Mines stands to the southern boundary of the machinery hall, and carried thence to the Frome road, be allotted to the School of Mines." The School of Mines had had the use of the machinery shed on the Exhibition grounds for some time, and they now wanted a guarantee that they would have the use of that shed when the Agricultural Society give up the Oval. The woolclassing students had the use of a room at the school, but had to move on account of the room being required by another class. The Council had decided to accept the offer by the Government of the use of the old Police Barracks for the woolclassing, on the understanding that their acceptance did not prejudice their claims for better and permanent accommodation later. It was pointed out that the operation of the Apprentices Act, the extension of technical education, and the training of returned soldiers, had been the means of taxing the accommodation of the school to its utmost, and each year would bring an increasing number of students and apprentices requiring to be trained. Sir Langdon Bonython had offered £5,000 towards the erection of a new technical school. The deputation also asked that the students of the School of Mines be allowed the use of the Jubilee Oval as a recreation ground. They said that the oval was not used one day in 10, and the students of the School of Mines had no place whatever in which to spend their spare time.

The Minister, in reply, said he was in sympathy with all their requests, and was of the opinion that if the ideals of the school were to be realized extra accommodation must be provided. He promised to place on record their desire for the use of the Agricultural Society's sheds, so that when the society removed to their new grounds the claims of the School of Mines would not be overlooked. He would place their requests before the Government, and also try to get the use of the Jubilee Oval for the students. He suggested that the various institutions interested should send representatives to a conference which could furnish a report setting out distinctly the individual requirements of each of those bodies.

Ref. 16.6.19.

Among the officers on the Kaiser-i-Hind, which arrived at the Outer Harbour on Saturday, was Major H. Thompson, M.C. Major Thompson is a former Rhodes scholar (1909), and when the war broke out was practising law in Adelaide. He had been engaged for a short period in journalistic work prior to entering the firm of Varley, Evan, & Thompson, Adelaide. He enlisted in July, 1915, in the 1st Reinforcements of the 10th Battalion, and in February, 1916, was transferred to the 50th Battalion. Altogether he had three and a half years of active service in Egypt and France, most of the time as staff-captain of the 4th Brigade.