

Advertiser
3.5.23

BRAINS GROWING SMALLER.

A PROFESSOR'S OPINIONS.

"SWOLLEN HEADS AND SMALL FACES."

EVOLUTION NOT PRODUCING SUPERMEN.

Professor Keith states that evolution is not working in the direction of supermen with swollen heads and small faces. In some countries brains are growing smaller.

LONDON, May 1.

Sir Arthur Keith, F.R.S., Hunterian Professor at the Royal College of Surgeons, lecturing at the Royal Institution to-day, said:—"Evolution is not working in the direction of supermen with swollen heads and small faces. There is positive evidence that in some countries brains are growing smaller. Not one person in 50 of the present population uses his brain to half its capacity. Most of us have more brain than we know what to do with. The most plastic bone in the human body is that under the gums, in which the teeth are rooted. In 30 per cent. of the British people this bone, instead of spreading outwards and giving the mouth a wide and low vault, as in the prehistoric races, is growing vertically, and giving a narrow plate. The wisdom teeth are thus often crowded out, which gives the nose and chin undue prominence.

The Digestive Organs.

"The adenoid type of face was unknown in prehistoric times. Modern men give their digestive tracts no rest. When not whipping them up with patent sauces, we are smoothing their rebellions with patent pills.

Dr. Kammerer's Investigations

"Professor Kammerer, of Vienna, is a scientist whose theories are worthy of every consideration, but thus far he has never produced a new faculty in the newt, which was originally sighted, and lost the faculty of sight. His experiments applied to the human being might restore dormant faculties. If so, instead of supermen, we might become jungle people again. Animal instincts would be restored and become dominant. I could, by experiment, produce a race of tailed men."

Professor E. W. MacBride, the biologist, and Drs. F. H. Marshall and G. Elliot Smith also speak highly of Dr. Kammerer's investigations.

PROFESSOR ROBERTSON'S VIEW.

INHERITED CAPACITY AND ENVIRONMENT.

When questioned on the subject of Dr. Kammerer's theory, Professor Brailsford Robertson, of the Adelaide University, said:—"I do not think that Professor Kammerer has been correctly quoted. He appears to have obtained hereditary modifications of the eye in newts by exposing them to particular colors of light, but the exact nature of the changes induced is not quite clear from the paragraph, although, doubtless, the observations are correct. Nevertheless, it is a far cry from the inheritance of such slight modifications of an organ of sense to the inheritance of intellectual and moral capacity modified by deliberate culture. Modern research in genetics has shown beyond question that all physical characteristics of the body are determined in the first place, by the hereditary characteristics transmitted by our ancestors, and only in a secondary degree by our environment. In the long

run, then, our mental powers are defined by the physical apparatus which we inherit in our brains. A certain equipment of neurones is capable of certain performance, and no more. But there is a sense in which Professor Kammerer's statements are correct, because the degree to which our mental powers are called forth and developed and utilised is unquestionably determined by the environment in which we find ourselves. Most of us, as Professor Keith has said, have more brain than we know what to do with. All of us have capacities which are never developed. Thus a man may inherit all the cerebral apparatus which would be necessary to make him a great musician, but if he chanced to be born in a community in which he never hears any music and cannot procure any instruction, he is likely to remain ignorant of his powers to the end of his days. Our environment is to some extent controllable by ourselves, and the environment of children is largely created by their parents. If parents have intellectual or artistic interests and high moral ideals, the children's latent capacity for appreciating those things will be called forth and developed. They, in their turn, will be likely to create the same environment for their children, and so in this sense, intellectual and moral effort may have results that for all practical purposes are the same as if they have been inherited, but they will be devoid of result if the children are born without an inherited capacity to appreciate the environment created for them by their parents."

Advertiser
3.5.23 ✓

THE PROFESSION OF POLITICS.

LECTURE BY PROFESSOR PHILLIPSON.

Under the auspices of the Liberal Men's Educational Association, Professor Coleman Phillipson delivered an interesting lecture on politics in the Institute Lecture-room, North-terrace, on Wednesday evening. The speaker, who has written a number of books on the fundamentals of government and is professor of law at the Adelaide University, expressed the opinion that the profession of politics was one of the most important—if not the supreme profession—that a man could take up. There was a large attendance, presided over by Mr. E. W. Hawker.

Professor Phillipson said despite the importance of the calling it was the only one for which expert knowledge and special qualifications were not insisted upon by the community. Whether it was through the blindness or apathy of the people it was difficult to say, but it seemed an amazing thing that they would not allow an artisan to lay bricks or mend a pair of boots unless he was really competent to do so, and yet they allowed men to make laws and perform the most delicate public functions without enquiring into their competence. They consequently got the politicians they deserved. The indulgence shown by democracies towards incompetent and unfit politicians was remarkable, and it had been said that this was particularly so in Australia. He was not concerned in his address with party politics, but rather with the fundamental principles of statesmanship, whereby they might be able to distinguish a true statesman from a spurious politician. What he ventured to suggest he hoped would be as acceptable to Laborites as to Liberals. The attitude of the thinking portion of the public had long been, and still was, one of uneasiness, distrust, and suspicion, and the very name politician had often been a byword for shiftness, insincerity, and self-seeking. But real statesmanship could scarcely be produced if the majority of the people cared little for the true elements of education and the cultivation of character, or if the masses spent their leisure in music halls and picture theatres, and if they gave way to such excesses in sport as involved mercenary motives. Another reason why they got second-rate politicians was the refusal of men naturally fitted for the task to come into the arena of animosity and personal abuse as existed to-day.

The lecturer said democracy had no doubt played a great part in the development of human institutions, but it was a mistake to make a fetish of it, for an uneducated democracy might become a many-headed monster. Information through party "organs" was insufficient for the citizens of a great Commonwealth. Char-

acter, love of truth and honor were indispensable, and without such attributes a nation was surely doomed. The party politics system and public opinion were the two great factors which supported on one hand and limited on the other the activities of statesmen and legislators. For a true public opinion in a political sense to exist among citizens they must first agree on certain fundamentals, such as the aim of government, the principles whereby it might be realised, and the methods of determining the action of the Government. There might be matters on which no public opinion existed. Hence the opportunity of leaders to enlighten it and use it as an instrument of reform. Leaders were more important than majorities. In political life the statesman was the leader. His responsibility was great. He was at once an educator, a law maker, a physician of society, and an artist, his material being human and national life. He must have regard to the community as a whole, and must not act with reference only to his party's demands of interests. A business training was not essential. A merely practical politician was useful in certain cases through his actual contact with his problems, but he was often deficient in vision and sense of proportion. The true statesman should be an expert in the best sense of the term, possessing knowledge of the different social sciences, notably law, political science, and economics. He should know history, which would show him the relation of the present to the past, and the potentiality of the future. He should know literature, which would reveal to him life and the world as seen and interpreted by great and sensitive minds. Above all, he must have a knowledge of men individually and collectively. He would see that liberty and order could be attained only through the State, and not through the schemes of fanatics, agitators, and theorists, when their enthusiasm blinded them to fact, reality, and experience. He would appreciate the rights of other nations, and would do his utmost to foster friendly relationships with them, so as to attain not only the well-being of his own country, but understanding, sympathy, fairness, and peace between all the nations of the world.

At the instance of Mr. R. B. McLeay and Mr. S. C. G. Wright, the lecturer was heartily thanked.

Herald ✓
3.5.23

Dr. John L. M. Kneebone, M.B., B.S., F.R.C.S., M.S., has been appointed surgeon superintendent of the Broken Hill and District Hospital for a period of three years, commencing in August next. Dr. Kneebone, who is 35 years of age, graduated at the Adelaide University in 1911. During 1912 he was senior resident surgeon at the Adelaide Hospital. He was then in private practice for a year, but when the war broke out joined up with the military forces, and served with the troops till 1919. The succeeding two years he served as senior surgeon of the London Hospital, and at the end of 1921 returned to Adelaide, where he got the degree of Master of Surgery of the Adelaide University. He then took up private practice at Jamestown (S.A.), and has been there ever since.

LAND TAXATION IN AUSTRALIA.

The Battle of Wits and Wigs.

IV.—By Dr. H. Heaton.

The Federal land tax was, in effect, an annual capital levy, amounting along with the State land tax to between 2½ per cent. and 5 per cent. of the unimproved capital value of very large estates. It was inevitable, therefore, that the victims of the tax should actively betstr themselves in self defence. Thus there began a long battle of wits and wigs between the taxpayer and the tax collector, with objections literally by the thousand, and scores of protracted and expensive appeals to Supreme and High Courts. The first stage of the fight was an attempt to induce the High Court to declare the Act ultra vires. It was urged that the tax was not so much an end in itself as a means towards the indirect control of land tenure and distribution. Its aim was not to raise revenue, but to "prevent persons resident in the Commonwealth from holding large areas of land and to prevent persons not resident in the Commonwealth from holding and owning land." As such it interfered with a branch of government which was by the Constitution distinctly left as a domestic affair to the States. On any foundation of fact or history this plea was sound; every page of the Hansard reports prove it; Labour members had often declared that the Federal Parliament was fighting the big estates because the State Governments would not or could not do so; and the Commissioner's reports have always dealt at length with the effect of the tax in causing subdivision of large holdings. But Hansard is not evidence in a High Court, and the Bench, unconcerned with legislative motives or indirect results of taxation, held the tax to be valid. The same ruling was given when an appeal was made against the extension of the tax to Crown leaseholds, and the Privy Council in effect affirmed the High Court's decision. Defeated in the Courts, the leaseholders appealed to the Treasurer against the absurdly high valuation of their leases by the Land Tax Commissioner, and asked for relief. Mr. Watt, the Treasurer at that time, relieved them by verbally instructing the Commissioner to suspend the collection of the tax on leaseholds, pending the report by a royal commission on the equity and incidence of the tax on leasees. That commission reported in 1919 in favour of taxing leaseholds, but still the tax remains uncollected.

Interpretation.

The second battle was marked by nearly 50 encounters in the High Court on matters of interpretation. Parliament had realized that attempts would be made to minimize the amount of tax payable by nominally subdividing large estates and transferring portions of them to members of the family or relatives, but really keeping the control of the estate and its income in the hands of the original owner. Therefore the Act tried to checkmate all such moves and virtually refused to recognise for taxation purposes any such changes in ownership unless the Commissioner was satisfied that the transfer was a genuine one and not made to evade tax. For instance, land transferred from husband to wife, or vice versa, was to be regarded as a joint interest, and not entitled to separate assessment and exemption, unless the Commissioner was satisfied that the transfer was not made to evade tax. Agreements for sale of land were not to be recognised unless the buyer had taken actual possession and paid 15 per cent. of the purchase money, or the vendor had satisfied the Commissioner that the sale was genuine. And so on, through a long series of complicated and comprehensive clauses which tried to anticipate every possible move on the part of taxpayers.

In the 30 High Court encounters on the interpretation of these clauses the taxpayer won nearly as often as the Commissioner, and almost every conceivable aspect of joint ownership of land passed under survey and fine judicial decree. The taxpayer's greatest triumph was the judicial ruling that the clause dealing with transfers between husband and wife was invalid, since the relations between husband and wife as well as conditions of land transfer were matters left by the Constitution to the States.