

SECONDARY EDUCATION AND COMMERCE.

From G. VON BERTOUCHE:—I read with particular interest the report in "The Advertiser" of the address given by the Rev. K. J. E. Bickersteth (headmaster of St. Peter's College) before the Chamber of Commerce Conference. Mr. Bickersteth stated:—"The boys wanted to specialise too young to learn bookkeeping, for instance, before they could do simple arithmetic. The trouble is that far too many enter upon a commercial course who should never be so trained at all, for they have greater talent in other directions, have not a commercial cast of mind, and many of them are naturally weak in the faculty of calculation. Mr. Bickersteth also said:—"Commerce was not in recent years getting the best boys in the school, and those whom they did get were not so useful as they would be if kept longer at school." I fully agree with this, and have stressed this very point before. I referred to the matter in a public lecture on "Vocational Guidance," which I gave at All Saints' lecture hall, Hindmarsh, on May 6, 1923. If the Commonwealth is to hold its own in the markets of the world it needs most

of all and most urgently to mobilise the brain power of its rising generation, extend educational facilities up to 18 years, raise the age of apprenticeship to 18 (in special cases to 20) years, and make authentic information available to the general public of likely employment needs in all kinds of trades and professions, the prospects of advancement therein. If the Chamber of Commerce Conference will form a vocational guidance board, composed of educationists and men of high standing in commerce, banking, law, and industry, it will confer a lasting service on the Commonwealth. This board would have its hands full of most important duties. Its efforts would provide for each child a chance to start better equipped for its true life work. Such a board would intelligently bridge that most dangerous gap which lies between leaving school and entering work. At the present time the vast majority jump this gap blindly, and everything is left more or less to some chance circumstance. No wonder so many fail in life, drifting from one job to another without an aim in life at all. And, on the other hand, the employers everywhere cry out that good employees are hard to find. The fault of this sad state of affairs, educationally, commercially, and industrially, lies with the whole community and the Government, because of its and their neglect of sciences bearing directly upon this subject, sciences which are most successfully applied in other countries. Our Government are practically pledged to technical education and technical training, but to make even the present inadequate facilities more effective requires the recognition and application of vocational guidance methods on scientific lines; methods which predetermine minutely and accurately any individual's talents, mental, physical, and manual aptitudes and special trend of mind. There are 40,000 children leaving our schools every year, and the State does not trouble what becomes of them until they reach 21 years of age, and then it is at their votes.

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Subsidies for Farmers

Mr. T. S. Ople:—Sir Mark Sheldon in his speech before the Chambers of Commerce advocated a system of subsidies, bonuses, and taxation remissions to improve the position of the man on the land.

For some years agricultural profits have been steadily decreasing, a situation caused through the fall in agricultural prices, together with a rise in the costs of production. As profits are the main stimulus of production, the problem which confronts the primary industries of Australia is one concerning the methods by which profits may be increased.

These methods may be grouped under three heads. Decreasing marketing costs, decreasing production costs, subsidies and bounties. Now the last method, as distinguished from the other two, is a nursing one, and the main objection against it is that it does not tend to promote productive efficiency.

Our protective tariffs were constructed with the purpose of developing our industries. But a Commission appointed about ten years ago to enquire into the effects of the tariff reported that the internal organisation and methods of individual factories left much to be desired.

Some farmers have only a vague idea as to their actual annual profits, while most of them cannot say on what operations they are gaining or losing. Buildings are erected, machinery is purchased, the interest and depreciation cost of which are larger than the form or holding should rightly bear. Things which should have been done are left undone, or are done at the wrong time. Our marketing methods, from the standpoint of the farmer, are badly in need of systematisation and centralisation.

Agricultural credit, marketing, and production, instead of being factors in one great system are at present, working independently from one another. Lack of efficiency and organisation is the real agricultural bogey, not falling prices.

Sir Mark Sheldon's scheme will not banish the bogey. It is merely an anaesthetic that will give temporary relief and produce an artificial exhilaration while the real evils will still exist and multiply. It will not encourage more efficient methods and organisation, but, by offsetting losses due to inefficient methods, induce the farmer to continue producing on the same old lines.

By all means help the farmer to negotiate the pitfalls of his industry, but do not accomplish this end by merely pasting tissue paper over them.

If surplus funds exist, use them to establish agricultural bureaus in the farming areas with agricultural experts whose business it would be to assist farmers in decreasing their costs of production, both from the business side of cost accounting and the production side of efficient methods of work.

But what is most needed is the organisation of credit, production, and marketing into one system. This is the direction in which progress must be made, otherwise decay will be the result.

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WIT AND HUMOUR.

PROFESSOR PHILLIPSON'S LECTURE

Interesting observations on "Wit and Humour" were made by Professor Coleman Phillipson, of the Adelaide University at a lecture under the auspices of the Victoria League of South Australia on Wednesday night at the Public Library lecture room. This was the league's first lecture for the 1924 season. There was a large attendance. Sir Josiah Symon, K.C., presided.

Professor Phillipson (who was greeted with applause) said:—"Humour has little to do with the canties of the red-nosed comedian, or the buffoonery and pantomimic gestures of Charlie Chaplin." All laughter was not due to the ludicrous. It was due to the perception of unexpected incongruities, arising from the contrast between idea and reality, between means and ends, and between effort and achievement. If the incongruities were very serious or dangerous, then tears (or their equivalent) might take the place of laughter.

The Meaning of Wit. After demonstrating the value and function of the comic spirit, as profoundly expressed by George Meredith, the lecturer explained the meanings and kinds of wit. He quoted various illustrations, which aroused great merriment.

The great humourist, discerning his kinship with the one laughed at (said the lecturer) could laugh at himself; he was capable of self-criticism, the quintessence of humour. He saw the littleness of the mighty and proud, and the mightiness of the weak and humble, although in all alike he got a glimpse of the infinite potentialities of the human soul. The grieved humourist, laughing at the absurdities of

men, revealed the true and the good, and might love the men themselves—for example, Don Quixote and Falstaff. He could make fun of the convictions of men, and yet respect them. What calamities had been brought on the world by religious bigots without a sense of humour every one knew; yet a grave mind was compatible with a sense of humour, which often had in it a pathos that brought one to tears. It might have even a tragic element, as in the supreme irony of Aeschylus and Sophocles, the grim humour of Dante, and especially the profound, tragic humour of Shakespeare. Less poignant examples were found in Thomas Hardy.

The Difference.

In conclusion Professor Phillipson made an elaborate contrast between humour and wit. Wit, he said, involving as it did a subtle comparison of ideas, needed a neat form of expression; humour dealt with things and persons, and form was of less importance. Wit appealed to the intellect, humour to the imagination and the emotion. Wit lost by repetition; humour often gained. Wit was often found in a line or a sentence; humour needed more continuous treatment. Wit was sudden; humour cumulative. Wit was obtrusive; humour unobtrusive. Wit was abstract often, and somewhat artificial; humour was concrete and natural. Wit was analytical and could not create character. The wit in plays could often be transposed from one to another; humour was synthetic and created the very essence of character. Wit could be cynical, even savage and crushing; humour was tolerant, humane. Wit inspired respect and fear; humour inspired love and confidence. Humour was far the greater. It was a gift of priceless value vouchsafed by providence to man as he played his little part in the earthly pilgrimage. (Applause.)

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RARE MARSUPIALS.

Discovered in South-east.

Local Scientists Interested.

Six toolaches—marsupials nearly as large as a small grey kangaroo—have been discovered in the south-east—and it is intended to preserve these rare animals from extinction by transferring them to Flinders Chase, Kangaroo Island.

Local scientists have been much interested in the presence of the animals, which live in the heath country between Robe and Penola. They were supposed to have been extinct. The toolache (Macropus greyi) is the fastest of all the wallabies, and is indigenous only to South Australia. All that otherwise exists of it are two skulls and skins in the British Museum, and a similar number in the Adelaide Museum. Professor Wood Jones, of the Adelaide University, who has done much research in this direction, has for the last four years been aware of the presence of the animals, the number of which was supposed to have dwindled down to four. This year he suggested to the Fauna and Flora Board that they should be rounded up, and transferred to Flinders Chase, Kangaroo Island, for national preservation. Funds to enable the visit to the south-east to be carried out were subscribed privately, and included among the party who went down last week-end were Messrs. J. C. Marshall, Dr. A. M. Morgan, Mr. Edgar R. Waite (Director of the Museum), and Professor Wood Jones. Local arrangements were in the hands of Messrs. A. Robson, J. Watson, and S. Fletcher, and the Robe District Council. A mile of wirenetting was dispatched, and two wings and a yard were erected. Thirty-two mounted men took part in the round up, and six toolaches were seen, but the animals were too fast for the collectors. It is expected that they will be caught within the next few days. The party, however, have already secured a joey, which was discarded from the mother's pouch. Professor Jones is doubtful whether it will be possible to rear it. A 14-acre wire enclosure has been erected at Kangaroo Island for the reception of the specimens, the capture of which is now in the hands of an enthusiastic local committee at Robe, who are acting in behalf of the Fauna and Flora Board.

THE HUNT AT ROBE.

ROBE, May 20.—Professor Wood Jones, Dr. A. M. Morgan, Mr. R. Waite, and numerous interested visitors, motored to Robe, to take part in the hunt. The beautiful little animals, toolaches, are almost extinct. The only ones of their kind are found near Konnetta Station, 27 miles from Robe. Forty horsemen and horsewomen took part in the hunt. Mr.

S. Fletcher was appointed captain of the team. Some remarkable chases took place, and clever horsemanship was shown, especially on the part of the younger generation. The stations, Konnetta, Mount Bruce, Comung, Elgin, and Wire Paddock, and also Lucindale and Furner were represented and the paddocks of Messrs. Watson and Fletcher mustered well. A halt was called for lunch without any toolaches having been yarded. The hunt was renewed with greater zeal, and seven kangaroos were sighted, but none could be yarded. Mr. W. Yeates discovered a joey which a doe had discarded or lost when pursued. A large number of persons collected to watch the proceedings. The weather was fine, and an enjoyable day was spent. Credit is due to the Chairman and members of the Robe District Council for the trouble they took to make the hunt a success. A large v-shaped yard was made of wirenetting. Interest in the hunt is increasing, and with more riders, hope is entertained for the capture of some of the rare animals.

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UNDERGRADUATES CENSURED.

HOBART, Wednesday. The conduct of undergraduates on commemoration day last week, about which there has been strong public protest, was considered by the University Council today. The following motions were adopted:—"1. That the professorial board be requested to enquire into the conduct of undergraduates on the afternoon of commemoration day and at commemoration, and to report to an early special meeting of the council on the disciplinary measures it recommends." 2. "That the council condemn in strongest terms the unseemly, improper incidents of the undergraduates' procession on the afternoon of commemoration day, and the disorderly conduct at the commemoration ceremony, and that the council convey to the Mayor of the city an apology

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AFFORESTATION.

A SOUTH-EASTERN SCHEME.

Millicent, May 21. During the past year or two an effort was made by a number of South-East business men to promote a company under the style of Australian Forests Ltd., with a capital of a million pounds with the object of undertaking commercial afforestation in the South-East. Seven Adelaide men assisted the movement, but the promoters failed to obtain the capital required. This scheme aimed at planting 10,000 acres of pine trees yearly. Still enamored of the proposition, the promoters drew up a less pretentious prospectus, and on Saturday, at Mount Gambier, a company was floated, under the title of Australian Forests, Ltd., with a capital of £50,000, in £1 shares, of which 39,000 will be held in reserve. A shilling per share is payable on application, 6/6 on a loan, 7/6 in twelve months, and the balance if and when required. This enterprise aims at planting 200 acres of pines per annum. The first directors are Messrs. B. C. Lewis (chairman), Francis Kay (Government Forester at Mount Burr), J. W. Williams (Millicent), R. M. Haig, and L. A. D. Garis (Mount Gambier). Mr. J. D. F. Harbison, of Mount Gambier, was appointed secretary. The chairman of directors is the manager of the National Bank at Mount Gambier. He is an ardent advocate of private afforestation, and has been a prime mover in the effort to form a company. At the meeting on Saturday a large parcel of shares was allotted. Articles of association were adopted, and agreements with the owners of the land to be planted under pines were signed. There are some remarkable features of the venture. The company has acquired about 4,000 acres of the most suitable land in the South-East, all close to the railway line, between Tantanoola and Mount Gambier. This was taken at a low assessed value, and the vendors receive no cash, but accept the whole of the purchase money in fully-paid shares in the company. The company has also acquired a fine nursery containing many thousands of trees ready to plant out, and the only consideration was shares to the value of the actual expenditure on the nursery. No bonus shares have been allotted to anyone, and there have been no flotation expenses. This is something unique in company promotion in Australia. A start has been made in preparing the land for this year's planting. An experienced foreman has been engaged, and it is hoped to get 200 acres under pines this year, on land within six miles of Mount Gambier. The measure of public support will determine the extent of future operations.