THE AUSTRALIAN RHODES REVIEW

No. 3 – 1937

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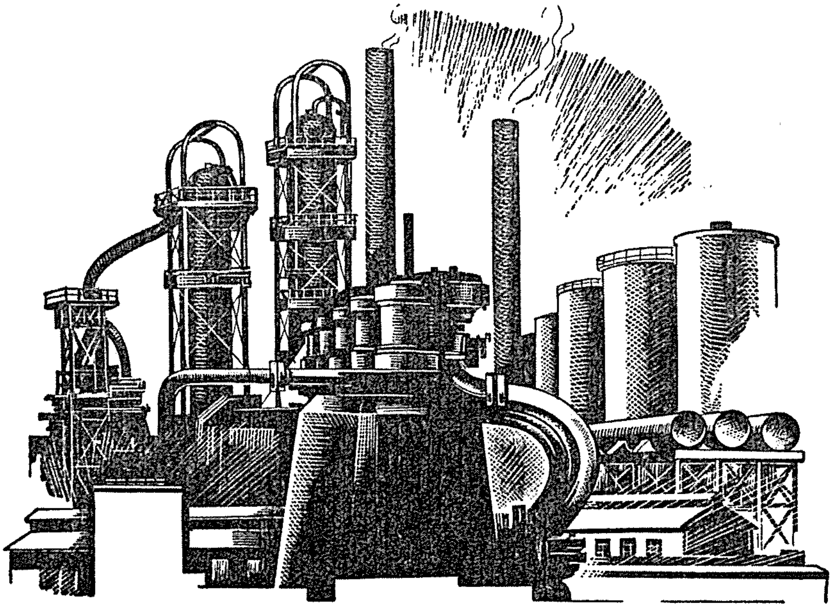
No. 3 1937



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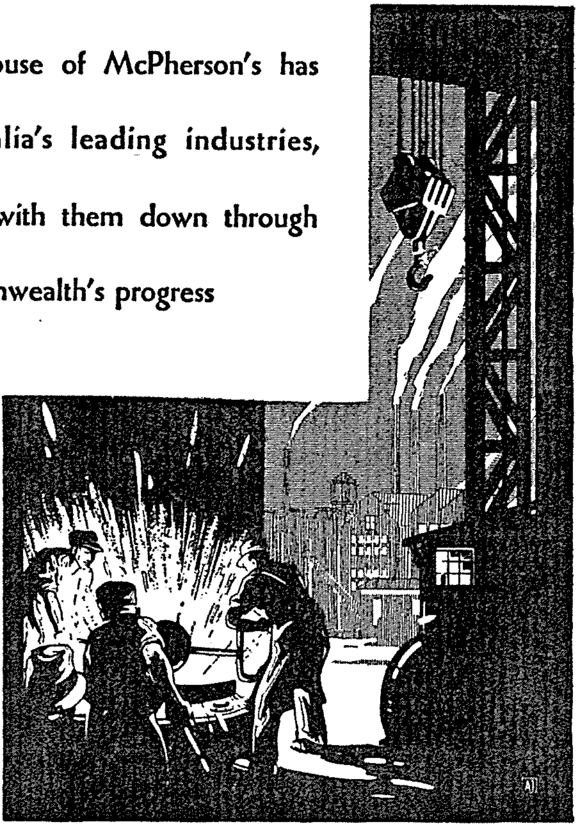

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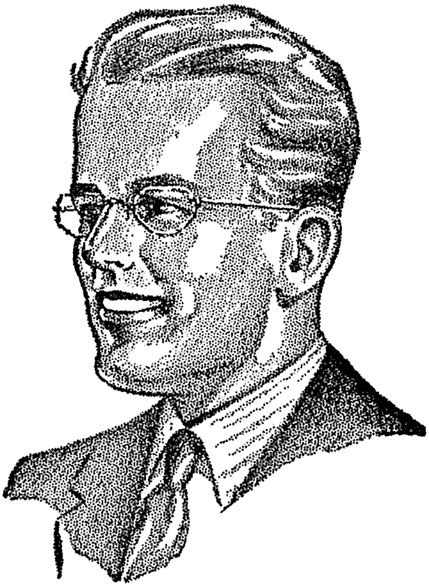

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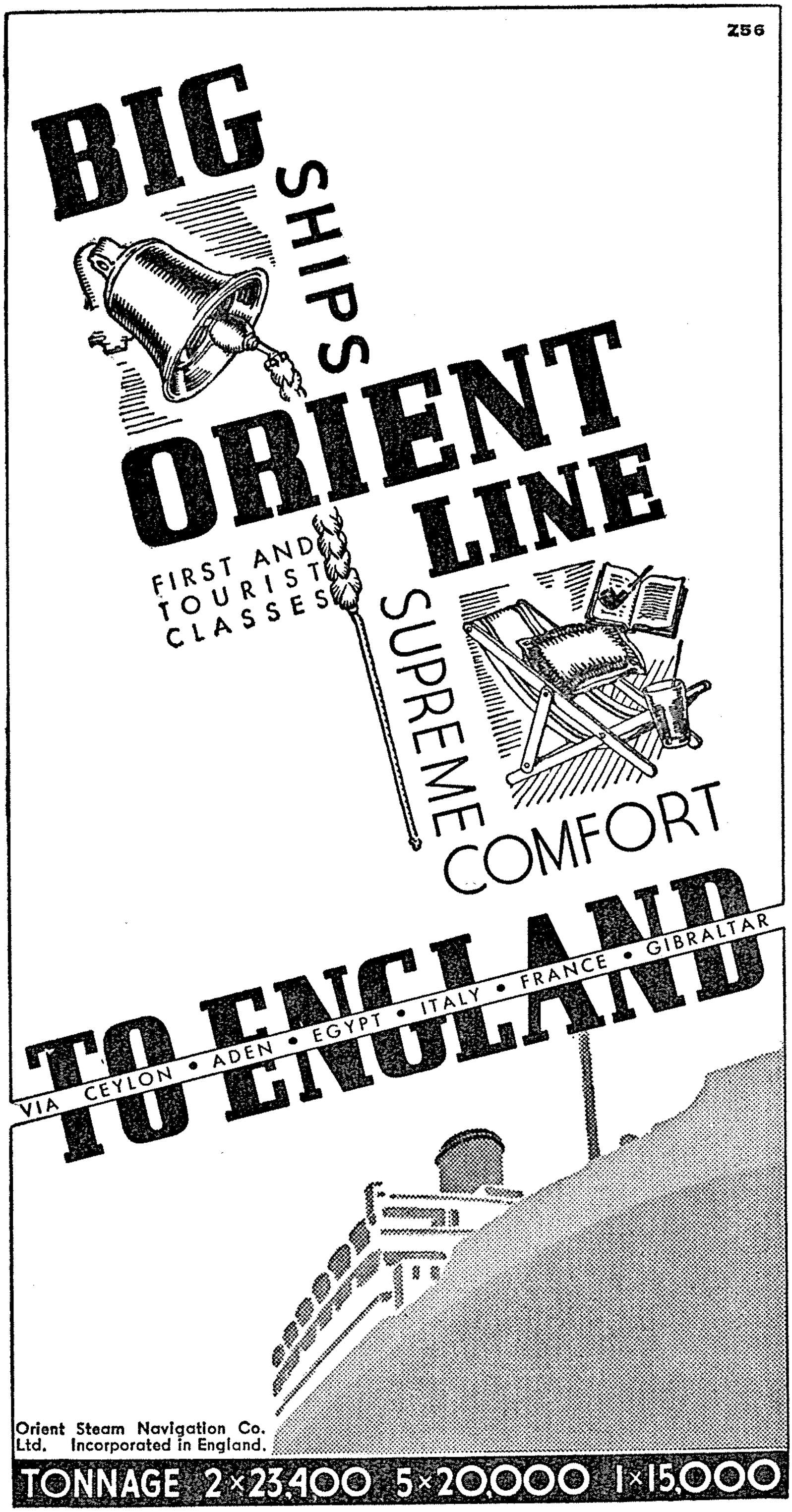
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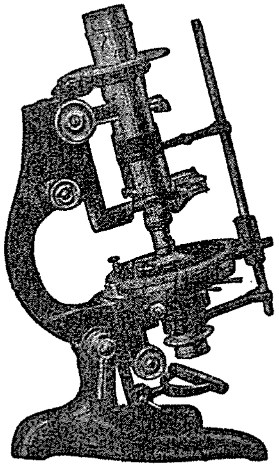

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THE AUSTRALIAN RHODES REVIEW

No. 3 - 1937

NOTES AND COMMENTS

A Third Attempt.

This is the third attempt by the Rhodes Scholars resident in Australia to produce a magazine "in the grand manner." From the financial point of view our previous efforts were disappointing, and it would be idle to deny it. But we received a sufficient number of unsolicited testimonials from the general public to encourage us to carry on, and to carry on in a manner equally grand. There have been two changes, however, in editorial policy. First, book reviews have been eliminated, as being out of place in a magazine which appears only once a year. Secondly, we have tried to give the "Review" a more definite character by asking contributors to confine their attentions to purely Australian problems. This is, in effect, a "problems number," and aims at being a genuine contribution by Rhodes Scholars towards a solution of a few of the practical problems existing in various aspects of Australian life. It should be emphasised that the views expressed by the several contributors are entirely individual, and in no sense represent the opinion of the Rhodes fraternity generally.

An Explanation.

It will be noticed that four of the articles in the following pages deal with educational matters, and this quota may be thought unduly large. The explanation, however, is simple: teaching of one kind or other happens to be the occupation of a substantial proportion of our number. Of the 99 Australian Rhodes Scholars now resident in this country, no fewer than 31 are engaged in educational work, and of these seven are contributors. The other 68, incidentally, are distributed as follows:—Law, 19; medicine, 16; engineering, 8; business, 7; farming, 4; the public services, 7; publishing, 2; journalism, 2; industrial chemistry, 2; and unclassified, 2. As many as 96 Australian Scholars have not yet returned to their native land, while 12 have passed on.

Should Rhodes Scholars Come Back?

This question is a vexed one. To many the fact that nearly five-score Rhodes Scholars have been lost to Australia—some of them, presumably, for ever—will be a matter for indignation, and it must be admitted that there is something to be said for their attitude. Certainly it is regrettable that the winning of the Scholarship should, in so many cases, amount to expatriation. It is not generally realised, however, that there is nothing in Rhodes' will to warrant a belief that he intended or wished his beneficiaries to return home after their time at Oxford, nor is sufficient recognition given to the fact that many Rhodes Scholars find repatriation a somewhat difficult process. The chief concern of the average scholar at the end of his third year at Oxford is to find a job, and find it quickly; and he is not often disposed to forfeit the opportunities he has in this direction in England on the off-chance of finding suitable employment in Australia. The truth is that he is only likely to return if he knows he is certain of a job when he does get back. This in its turn often depends on whether he has kept in touch with influential people out here—or, alternatively and more accurately, on whether people on the spot have kept in touch with him. The Rhodes fraternity has realised this, and attempts have been made to devise machinery for the purpose. How successful the attempts have been it is impossible at this stage to say, but the principle is clearly worth persevering with. One thing is certain: nothing is to be gained by insisting that Scholars are under a moral obligation to return, no matter what the cost to themselves may be.

Fairbridge.

All those interested in the Rhodes ideal, and a great many more besides, will be glad to hear of the progress made in connection with the Fairbridge scheme in New South Wales. Some time ago the fraternity in that State conceived the idea of starting a farm there on the Pinjarra model, and arrangements were made to launch an appeal for funds. The response was immediate and startling, so much so that at the time of writing, a bare year after the inauguration of the campaign, preparations for the reception of the first batch of children are in full swing. Including promises and bequests, a total of £62,000 has been raised so far, while the various Governments have agreed to pay 12/- out of the 17/- per week required for the maintenance of each child. A property of 1,500 acres has been acquired near Molong, in good country about 180 miles west of Sydney, and the work of preparation has been proceeding apace. A windmill, tanks and water reticulation have been constructed, three cottages are nearing completion, and the Principal's house is under way. The first party of twenty-eight boys will arrive in Sydney towards the end of January, and will be taken in charge there by the Principal, Mr. R. R. Beauchamp, an ex-naval man who has had a good deal of experience of Fairbridge, and has been farming in New Zealand for some years. It is hoped that the farm will be formally opened by the Governor-General next Easter.

The Rhodes Scholars of New South Wales are justly proud of the success of their venture—a venture so eminently in keeping with the Rhodes tradition, and it is appropriate that they should be permanently linked with the scheme by having four statutory seats on the committee. But they are the first to pay tribute to the generosity of those who contributed so nobly and so materially to the project, and in particular to the anonymous benefactor who, without any solicitation whatever, has recently bequeathed £7,000 to the Farm.

N. H. MacNeil (Victoria, 1914), to whom the success of the venture is in no small measure due, has asked us to suggest that Rhodes Scholars who happen to be visiting Sydney in the near future should let him know of their presence, so that he can arrange for them to visit the Farm. His address is Knox Grammar School, Wahroonga.

The Federal Election.

The Federal election has come and gone without any substantial change in the Parliamentary situation. As was anticipated, there was an appreciable swing of votes in favour of Labour, but rather surprisingly only one seat appears to have been lost by the Government in the House of Representatives, while Labour's gains in the Senate were not sufficient to give it control. On the whole it was a dull election—largely, perhaps, because the issues at stake were not exciting enough to shake the average Australian elector out of his increasing indifference to politics. In point of fact, the only question on which there was a real cleavage of opinion between the parties was that of external policy, and it is to be feared that nothing short of war itself can combat the Australian's insular disregard for this question. The international situation, however, is a matter of vital importance to everybody to-day, and it is without hesitation that we publish two articles discussing Australia's part in it. (pp. 4—23). The authors of both these articles, it will be noted, advocate a policy of Australian isolationism—and although this is not a policy which is likely to commend itself to Australians in general or to Rhodes Scholars in particular, it is at least worthy of sober consideration.

It should be noted that no Rhodes Scholar is a member of the Commonwealth Parliament: none stood. The Fraternity is represented in the State Legislatures by W. S. Kent-Hughes (Victoria), R. J. Rudall (South Australia) and F. B. Edwards (Tasmania). To those who believe that Rhodes intended his beneficiaries to make every effort to enter political life this may seem somewhat unsatisfactory. It is not clear, however, that such was the Founder's intention; and it should be remarked that the political field is not the only one in which a man may render effective service to the community.

DECLINE AND FALL OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE

AN AUSTRALIAN NATIONALIST POINT OF VIEW

BY P. R. STEPHENSEN.

HISTORY is the tale of waxing and waning empires. All empires have waxed before waning. Britain's Empire has waxed—will it now wane? Yes, inevitably. An empire is no more permanent than an oak-tree: the mighiest oak must fall, rotting hollow at the core. Everything that has life in it has death in it, too. A moment of rapture, or a moment of power, can not be prolonged unduly beyond its zenith. Where there has been strength and greatness, there must come sequent decline and fall. Without deaths, there would be no births. Death is necessary, to make way for more life. Old empires, old cultures, must crash—and Britain's Empire with them—to make way for new empires, new cultures. Who would have it otherwise? Only those who object to death's inevitability and to time's changes! Let them object—the objection is noted—and history's blind processes go on.

Britain's Empire reached its zenith in the time of Cecil Rhodes. On Mafeking Night the Empire stood at the peak of its achievements; and afterwards it began, imperceptibly at first, to decline in power. Almost forty years have gone by since Mafeking Night—are we still to think in Mafeking terms? Elderly people will do so, from the force of their youthful habits; but youngsters, men and women below forty, have thoughts on the subject of Mafeking and of the Empire, half-articulated thoughts, which would appal their seniors of the Grand Tradition. The nineteenth century saw Britain's Empire rise to the crest of its power. The twentieth century sees Britain's Empire begin to decline and fall.

Of what use is the Empire to Britain? This is a question for the British of Britain themselves, and not for quizzical colonials, but it is a question that the British will ask themselves increasingly. Decadence in an empire comes from within, as decadence in an oak comes from within, by rotting at the core. The colonial visitor to Britain sees that the population there is stratified, and that the lower stratum comprises many millions of people who are under-nourished, mal-educated, servile, badly housed, and subject to that chronic kind of idleness named "unemployment"; while the upper stratum is also chronically unemployed in another way—grown indolent through passively drawing dividends from overseas. What's this, then—the workshop of the world?

Bread and circuses—the dole and Wembley Stadium, the dole and Harringay Park dog-track, the dole and the Coronation procession—are we expected to be blind to history's parallels? And the birth-rate decline in Britain: how can such a portent be ignored? Empires do not fall solely because of foreign attack. On the contrary, this often rallies empires. Empires fall through internal causes: unwieldiness, embarras de richesses, class dissensions, weariness of power, desire for peace.

Empires are made by war, and grow by war: Britain's Empire as much as any other. When the lust for power, for territorial aggrandisement, for political construction and domination, has been thus sated, after a period, and when the desire for peace, "world" peace, comes, as it came to Alexander when he had No More Worlds to Conquer—then it is the beginning of the end for an empire—for Britain's Empire as much for any other. Why baulk at facts? Britain's present oft-professed desire for peace is a desire for stagnation, of decadence: for, in the case of an empire, preservation of the status quo means decadence—if empires are to live, they must grow.

Britain's Empire has been built, and has continually grown, not by peace, but by war. If we are to grant empire-builders this premise of historical fact, then empire-building depends on a constant readiness to wage war, for territorial expansion. When the League of Nations, which was an Anglo-French mechanism for "making" Germany pay" for the last "Great" war, first failed in fact to make Germany pay, and then, shortly afterwards, shirked a military contest with Italy on the Abyssinian question, the old power of British diplomacy in Europe was on the wane. The previous shirking of a military contest with Japan on the Manchukuo question merely makes the matter clear. Empires are based on power-politics: if that power is not used promptly when the occasion warrants it, the empire game is up. Drake or Nelson would have been into Mussolini like a chicken into corn. Baldwin and Anthony Eden allowed their bluff to be called. They shirked a war—perhaps wisely, who knows? for eleven million people in Britain had voted in a straw ballot for peace at about the time of the Abyssinian Crisis—but, whatever the reason, when an empire shirks a war, that Empire is on the chute. Pacifism in Britain may be a sign of a growing humanity there: that is not the only point to consider: it is also a sign of inevitable decline in imperial power. Empire means war—it can mean nothing else. If you support the Empire, you must not shirk war and war-making, ad infinitum. A pacifist empire presents a self-contradictory idea which not even the most ingenious of liberal ratiocinations could explain away.

An empire increases externally by war, and stagnates if it does not increase. There must be new excitements, new conquests, new loot, new structures, to maintain an empire at pitch. The two minor wars being waged by Britain to-day—in North-west India and in Palestine—though they occupy more men than were occupied at the battle of Waterloo, and almost as many men and guns as are now occupied in any major battle in Spain, are suppressed from the news—why? The British of Britain no longer desire war's excitements: this is a most profound proof of decadence. Forty or fifty years ago, Lord Roberts was regarded almost as a demigod for doing no more on the Indian Frontier than a General, whose name it would require considerable research to discover, is now doing there, in undeserved obscurity. The British of Britain are sick of wars.

An empire, too, must be maintained internally by force. Never mind the moral suasion: that is only the glove on the mailed fist. The last time the British successfully coerced a part of the Empire was in the war against the Boers. Our respected Founder, Cecil Rhodes, had a hand in that; but the British, even then, did not show themselves able to coerce the Boers without Australian and New Zealand aid.

Since that time, the British have failed to coerce Ireland, they have failed to coerce Egypt, and they have more or less failed to coerce India. Through lack of force, lack of imperiousness (imperial aggressiveness) within themselves, the British of to-day have had to make political concessions to Ireland, Egypt and India, which the British of yesterday would never have considered making. The concessions thus extracted must tend to have a disintegrating effect upon the Empire but the real disintegration lies in a lack of imperiousness in the British themselves. I fancy that Rudyard Kipling died a very disappointed man.

To-day, if South Africa were to become really truculent, it is doubtful whether British arms could coerce the South Africans. If Canada were to default on interest-payments, it is doubtful whether the British would dare to send an army of occupation there. If Australia, experiencing a profound change of mind, were to decide on a policy of debt-repudiation (or of making token-payments, as Britain has made to the U.S.A.), it is doubtful whether British arms would be strong enough to coerce this Commonwealth, or to dictate what we should do.

Failing in coercion, the Empire now must be ruled by bluff and moral suasion, or by bluff alone. The other name for this bluff is sentimental propaganda—"blood-thicker-than-water" speeches such as those which were delivered by the Welshman, J. H. Thomas, to the French-Canadians and Dutch-South-Africans at the Ottawa Conference. A different kind of rhetoric would be needed in India; and no argument would avail in Ireland.

If Britain's leaders of to-day shirk a declaration of war against any first-class power, or group of powers, it is because they realise that imperial sentiment, within the Empire's many component and disparate parts, is tending to evaporate with the effluxion of time. Britain's leaders can no longer be sure either how their own people, in Britain, or how the people of the near-flung and far-flung parts such as Ireland, Egypt, India, South Africa, and Canada, would react to a sustained major war. They are fairly sure of the loyalty of Australia and New Zealand, for these two outposts are inhabited by more-or-less complacent colonials; but they could not be sure of the unwavering Empire-loyalty of any other parts of the Empire: even Stow-on-the-Wold might rebel if an attempt were made to conscript Stow-on-the-Woldians for military service abroad.

I put it realistically: let ostriches hide their heads when a storm approaches: the Australian national bird is the inquisitive emu: ought we to be motived any longer by merely sententious phrases?

When Britain had a two-power standard, and was able to lick any other two (or more) nations combined, at sea, in any part of the world, then, perforce, Britain was duly great and glorious. To-day, does Britannia rule the waves? In particular, does Britannia rule the waves of the Baltic Sea, of the Mediterranean Sea, of the Black Sea, of the Sea of Azov, of the China Sea, or of any of the American Seas? If not, then why go on talking as though things had not changed in forty years? For centuries Britain has been invulnerable at home, isolated by water from all possible enemies. Hearts of Oak were enough to keep all foes away; but Hearts of Oak cannot intercept air-raiders. We live in the age of Air Power, not of Sea Power, paramount. Why avoid the facts, merely because they are unpleasant? Within half-an-hour of the declaration of war, or even before a British "ultimatum" to a foreign power had expired, thermite bombs would almost certainly be raining on London. To pretend otherwise is merely to be obstinately blind to reality. The British statesmen are not blind to these realities, though leader-writers and sermon-spruikers may ignore them.

Because of this new vulnerability of Britain to air attack, the old game of power-politics has lost its sedateness, for Britons. A diplomatic bluff nowadays may be too terribly and quickly called. Diplomacy has lost its finesse. It is because of this new vulnerability that Britain to-day hesitates before engaging in war against any first-class power, or combination of powers. Even if Britain could win ultimately, the game would not be worth the candle. All talk, then, of British "world"-pacification by huge armament is a bluff, a dangerous bluff and a pathetic bluff: a bluff which may be called, no matter how enormous the British armament, or re-armament, may be. This talk of British "world"-policemanship is sad talk to-day: a feeble echo of the erstwhile Pax Britannica, an empty mouthing of old words, faded slogans. Britain alone can do nothing decisive to-day to "pacify" the world by force: the terrible striking power of aircraft has changed the face of diplomacy and has altered the complexion of war.

Britain therefore seeks allies to aid her in policemanship. The aid of France, Russia and the U.S.A. is invoked: aid for Britain in pacifying the world by force—a task now too great for Britain alone. And of these three possible allies, two of them—Russia and the U.S.A.—appear to be each more powerful, in arms, industrial resources, equipment, men and wealth, than Britain. Britain seeks aid from stronger nations!

The Russians have never been anything less than treacherous throughout all their history: is it likely that they have changed their natures now, under the rule of the Sultan Stalin? The Slav temperament is subtle, a chess-playing temperament: Russians always want a quid pro quo. What is their quid pro quo to Britain and France for proffered aid? Freedom for communist propaganda, surely—something not exactly helpful to the theory of a Permanent Empire!

These be strange stable-companions—capitalistic Britain and sovietistic Russia: how long could they run in double-harness? Or suppose the Russians, in a moody outburst of unpredictable Slav temperament, decided suddenly to join forces with Germany or Japan, or both, in return for a better bargain than Britain or France could offer? Could Britain, then, even if aided by France and the U.S.A., "pacify" a hostile combination of Germany, Russia, Italy and Japan?

Pity Mr. Anthony Eden! He has his work cut out.

Russia is the joker in the pack. The British Empire no longer dominates "world"-politics, as it did forty years ago. Britain to-day is only one of seven "great" powers, each more or less equal in military aggressive strength. If the whole of the other six powers, or any four of them, were to turn against Britain, and were to make thus any strong or united demand, could Britain really say nay? God help Mr. Eden (and Britain) if he fails to maintain France and Russia and the U.S.A. as Britain's friends! It has come to this: that the perpetuation and maintenance of Britain's Empire depends on "foreign" aid, and on "foreign" alliances.

To seek for support in the U.S.A. is an extremely dubious expedient. Old sores rankle there: Irish, German and Italian influences are strong: Yankee elements do not forget Britain's aid to the slavers of the South, and memories go back even to Lord North and the Hessians: all Americans know how callously Lloyd George side-tracked President Wilson's "idealism" at Versailles; all Americans know and resent the fact that Britain has defaulted on interest-payments of the British war debt to the U.S.A.: most Americans are anti-monarchical, and some have a grudge against the Archbishop of Canterbury because of a recent imagined slur to American womanhood: American oil, cinema, and motor-car exporters have had to fight what they regard as unfair British competition in many of the markets of the world: most Americans since 1914-18 have an ingrained "New World" dislike of interfering in what they regard as dogfights of the Old World. The cumulative effect of all this is America's recent neutrality legislation.

It is only if civil strife were to become serious at home, in America, that America's leaders would agree to co-operate with Britain in a foreign war, to create a diversion. But even if they did thus co-operate, they too would want a quid pro quo—cancellation of the Ottawa Agreements, for example, and free entry of American goods into all British markets. This would be almost as bad in the long run for Britain as Russia's quid pro quo. All Britain's likely allies will want a quid pro quo—such is the result of being reputed rich and powerful. Pity Mr. Eden! Pray for him. (There is nothing else we can do.)

It is because Britain's hand in international affairs has become so weakened since the last "Great" war—and particularly by the tremendous growth of strength in Russia, Japan, Germany and Italy: four distinct national renaissances—that Britain to-day so seriously desires peace. But British "re-armament," no matter how colossal, is not in itself enough to ensure "peace" (by force) against the four new-national movements of Russia, Germany, Italy and Japan. In these four countries there is something more than re-armament: there is a zest, a will-to-power, a national re-birth, a resurgence (call it what you will), a new discipline, a new system of life, similar to that which Britain herself once experienced, by spontaneous combustion, in the days of Queen Elizabeth, and a second time in the days of Queen Victoria. The origin of these resurgences appears difficult to define: they are of the biological, rather than of the abstractly political, order: they resemble flowering and fruiting in a plant after quiescence; or, if you prefer it, they resemble plagues of mice, locusts, grasshoppers, conditioned by who knows what impulse of sudden fecundity. The spirit of optimism, and of belief in themselves, is in nations affected by this impulse.

Mere "re-armament" by Britain could not put down this spirit in these inconvenient foreign countries: nor could it be put down by British self-righteousness and pretence of moral rectitude and "pacific-democratic" intention. The only effective answer to such foreign assertiveness would be an even greater assertiveness, of a biological, will-to-power kind, on the part of Britons. But in Britain the population is tending to fall: in these other countries the population is increasing: there is the fact to consider. In Britain industrial effort is slackening, despite the sad stimulus of "re-arming": while, in these other countries, industrial effort has risen to previously undreamt-of heights!

When Britain ceased, under the leadership of Mr. Baldwin, to be a free-trade country, and began to rely on tariffs, bounties, quotas, horse-power taxes, and preferential trade agreements, in order to "protect" British manufacturers against foreign competition, in Britain's own home market, no less than in the markets of the Empire, *that* was the beginning of the end, for those who can read writing on a wall. When British industry had be thus coddled as against "foreign" industry, and when the workshop of the world became the world's pawnshop, and when the nation of shopkeepers had to bribe customers to buy, and when the Tourist Industry became Britain's greatest industry (the Land of the Free as a Museum-Piece), and when pomp and pageantry become the main goods for sale in Britain's shop-window, and when hotel-keeping became the national standby—then is the stage not set for decline and fall?

How can we, with confidence, accept the notion that Britain is the guardian of "democracy" in the world to-day? In Britain's Empire there are 500 million people: and only 100 million of these are white. Does anybody seriously suggest that the 400 million coloured people in this Empire have "democratic equality" with the 100 million whites? Is it seriously suggested that, say, in New Guinea or India, the coloured people are self-governing and democratic? Why give countenance to such a falsehood? Britain's Empire is, in fact, a thoroughly dominated Empire, as all empires must be. It is, in fact, governed monarchically, not democratically. It is, in fact, the outstanding example of a survival of the monarchic system in the world to-day. No wonder foreigners laugh at the claim that Britain is democratic! The Coronation of Britain's monarch resembles nothing more than an ancient Roman "triumph"—with proconsuls of the imperium, and colonial troops, parading in the train of the Emperor and Empress. And this kind of thing is held up to the world as an example of the "democracy" of which Britain is the divinely-appointed, or self-appointed, guardian in the world to-day! It may be said that this is a mere show, and that the "reality" of "democracy" is in Britain. *Oh, yes?* Is it seriously suggested that the Monarch, the Privy Council, the House of Lords, and the whole of Britain's closely-organised minority ruling class, are "democratically elected" to rule Britain and Britain's Empire?

The objection here taken is not to autocratic rule; for all rule must, at any crisis, be autocratic, as Czar Stalin has recently demonstrated. The objection is taken merely to a logical weakness, which reveals also a psychological weakness, in Britain's claim to be the world's champion of democracy. In fact, no country in the world—with the possible exception of India, which is also under the British Crown—is so *undemocratically* ruled and organised as is Britain. There, the caste system, the stratification of the community into strictly defined tiers, and the system of rule by oligarchy and hereditary bureaucracy flourish to perfection. Who denies this? Then why should we be taken in by the claim, so obviously a prevarication, that Britain's Empire stands for "democracy"? The claim lacks novelty as well as truth; but because of its lack of novelty it is none the less false. An empire must be ruled imperially, and can be ruled in no other way. If Britain's Empire were, in fact, truly "democratic," it would cease to be an empire. Every pretence to the contrary reveals a weakness, either of conscience or of logic.

The attempt to make it appear, contrary to realities, that the Empire is not an empire, but a democratic benevolent institution, is only another portent of decline and fall. A strong empire need not be afraid to be imperial. Victoria was a Queen and an Empress, without apology; but there have been changes since her heyday. When her great-grandson, Edward the Eighth, came to the throne, the claim was made (not by him) that he was a "democratic" monarch, but no vote of the people was taken on the question of his ascending the Throne, still less was it considered necessary for any vote of the public to be taken on the question of his renouncing that exalted Seat. He came to the Throne, and he left it, by thoroughly undemocratic procedure, as was meet, right, proper and fitting, under the imperial and monarchic system of Britain; but to claim that this imperiousness is not imperial, that this royalty is not royal, and that this Empire is not an empire, but a "democracy," is to make claims which are false, misleading, demoralising, and decadent.

Another false and demoralising claim is made in regard to the political relationships between Britain, as "Motherland," and the outlying parts of provinces of the Empire. In this field of thought it is pretended that the Empire is not an empire, but a Commonwealth.

Then can a change of name change the nature of a thing? To pretend that the "Dominions" have, in fact, "equal status" with Britain in matters of foreign policy, declaring war, and collecting dividends, is to pretend a gross humbug. It is another of those manifestations of the Nonconformist conscience which took the world by surprise in the days of Mr. Gladstone, but no longer has power to amaze. Inasmuch as the pretence that the Dominions have "equal status" with Britain is a line of thought that has been put forth by leaders of Britain such as the late Arthur Balfour, it reveals a weakness in them; or, worse, a semi-theological subtlety which maintains that that that is not, is. From the strictly imperial point of view, it was bad enough when Britain "granted" the "right" of "self-government" to some of her colonies; but this grant had an excuse in that it cost Britain nothing—and the right was one which in any case would have been taken by the Colonies if it had not been granted. Ultimately, the Colonies so enfranchised were merely granted the right to tax themselves for Britain's benefit. Britain has reserved, and has exercised, the right to dismiss a Colonial Government reluctant to do this.

But to go further, and to "grant" what is termed "equal status" to these Colonies was, from the imperial point of view, an irrevocable act of weakness on the part of Britain. It implied a recognition either of the growing strength of the "Dominions," or of the growing weakness of Britain, or both; in either case it was an abrogation of the imperial principle, a timidity in grasping the sceptre, which, if genuine, reveals decadence—and, if not genuine, reveals a humbug.

I put forth this analysis in these pages fully cognisant of the fact that very few Rhodes Scholars endorse it, and hereby duly warning readers of that fact. It is nevertheless as well to dispel a possible public illusion that all Rhodes Scholars are of a uniform political pattern, and that all are in the queue for Knighthoods or the O.B.E.

Oxford, thank goodness, is not yet a mental sausage-factory, and Oxford men need not pretend to be academic chain-meat. I have never had occasion, either before, during, or since my tenure of the Scholarship, to believe that there is any obligation upon Rhodes Scholars to think "imperially" in the manner of forty years ago.

Cecil Rhodes was a man of his time, and history did not cease at his death. He made his money as fairly as could be expected in the circumstances, and left it, like a good sport, without attempting to bind the minds of his beneficiaries in any way. The Founder's ideas were appropriate to his time. He hoped that Colonials, Germans and Americans would learn, at Oxford, to respect some of the good things in English life, as indeed they do under the Scholarship. He might well have foreseen that some of them would make an adverse comparison between conditions in England generally (outside Oxford) and conditions in their native lands. If the Founder were alive to-day, he might be making his will to send selected specimens of beef-and-brain away from England to the Dominions, to America, and to Germany, for an education.

As an Australian, I feel no urge, "moral" or otherwise, in my political thinking, to put the interest and welfare of Britain's Empire before the interests and welfare of Australia.

I try to be concerned, as a citizen of the Australian community, with the strengthening and development of Australia, rather than with any attempt to strengthen and develop Britain's Empire—which, scattered as it over the world and heterogeneous in racial structure, has far too many structural weaknesses to be politically permanent. I regard the Empire as an historical patchwork, with a past that was glorious, and a future distinctly dubious.

"World" diplomacy, as practised by Britain's leaders of to-day, I consider to be nothing but a preliminary to inevitable and futile "world" war—a war which will be caused as much by Britain's hesitancy in imperiousness, and vacillation in acquisitiveness and possessoriness, as by any other factor. Yet Britain could not be anything other than hesitant and vacillating, for the time has come when Britons are weary of it all. They have sucked the orange dry.

The signs of weakness, in Britain to-day, I consider are most portentous for Australia. We have recently been told, repeatedly, by responsible British authorities, that, in the event of "world" war, Britain's navy will not be able to guarantee either to defend Australia's coasts or to keep open Australia's lines of overseas communication. This throws upon us the onus of self-defence, and of self-dependence.

Australians should grasp the opportunity eagerly. With a population of approximately 6,820,000 persons, living on an island that is genuinely isolated by ocean distances from the nearest possible hostile power, and with a coastline easily defensible by aircraft, and living in a land which cannot be starved out by blockade, Australians ought now to be able to look after themselves. We ought to accept our responsibilities as an adult nation—and to say, "What we have we'll hold." There is, I believe, no actual serious danger of armed invasion from overseas. The hazards and the cost would be too great for any one of the Powers to contemplate—and they all have other pigeons, nearer home.

All that the Powers would be likely to demand from Australia would be freedom of trade, and no discriminatory tariffs against them, imposed to coddle Britain. This fair request Australians, in our own interest, ought to concede: for while the world market is expanding, the purely "British" market for Australain products seems likely to shrink.

If there were such a thing as Australian diplomacy, there would be no need for Australia to become involved in a war. But British diplomacy could lead us, again and again, into that series of enervating wars inseparable from the idea of an empire—particularly of an empire in the phase of decline and weariness.

A new way of thought for Australians, a way of national and self-dependent thought, seems indicated as the way of Australian self-preservation. If Rhodes Scholars are anything more than mere individual careerists, questions such as this will be freely discussed among us: and sincere dissident opinion will be patiently and logically refuted if considered fallacious. If, on the other hand, the sum of £1,200 each is enough to buy our silence when Empire matters are discussed, or, worse, to buy our automatic commendation of the British Conservative Party's Empire policies, then our price is very low indeed.

Those three years at Oxford were delightful. The English at their best are the best people in the world, the nicest; but when a man has a country like Australia for a motherland, his primary allegiance could not be to any other country, nor could his primary concern be for the welfare of any other country than his own. It was not the grandfathers of the present-day English who pioneered and developed Australia. It was the grandfathers of the present-day Australians who did this farflung job. The English who live in England to-day are merely the descendants of the stay-at-homes, the unadventurous.

The kindest thought we could have for the Empire is to hope, sincerely, that its demise will be as painless as possible for those charming people who were our hosts during the three most carefree and callow years of our lives.

POLITICAL ISSUES IN AUSTRALIA TO-DAY

By HERBERT BURTON.

ANY analysis of political issues in Australia written at the end of October, 1937, might be expected to deal almost exclusively with the issues confronting the Australian electors in the recent Federal elections. Although this analysis will naturally deal with these issues, it will mainly be concerned with an examination of what seem to be the fundamental political issues which confront Australia at this period of her history. These fundamental issues were touched upon in the election programmes of the contending parties, but it may be doubted whether any of the chief political parties are fully conscious of their ultimate implications. In the election campaign a number of minor and ephemeral issues were introduced, about which there is probably no fundamental disagreement; for example, minor questions of reform of the banking system, and of the exact nature of the form that should be given to a scheme of National Insurance. These minor questions probably had the effect of obscuring the major issues to a large extent, but the latter are not on that account any less significant or real. The really great issues confronting Australia to-day are questions of our external relations; our policy towards foreign affairs, trade relations within the Empire and with other countries, and our attitude towards the League of Nations and a system of international law and order. Compared with these matters our internal problems are for the moment of minor importance, and the solution of them may justifiably be said to hinge upon our decisions in the more vital matters. The issues with regard to external relations may be summed up as Imperialism versus either Nationalism or Internationalism.

I do not mean to imply by this that our internal problems are not important; they are tremendously important, but they are simply relegated to the background for the moment by the precarious state of international relations in the world to-day, and by the menace to the peace of the world and of Australia. When a motorist is hanging suspended over a precipice, he does not worry unduly about the justice of his last income tax assessment, or about the rights or wrongs of women being employed in industry. And so it is in Australia to-day. We have domestic problems enough to deal with in Australia, God wot, but what is the use of reforming our banking system, or abolishing slums, if presently our cities are to be bombed into a shambles?

The Royal Commission on the Monetary and Banking System has just pointed out where banking needs strengthening and alteration in order to minimise or prevent future economic fluctuations. The leaders of the two major parties have both accepted, in varying degrees, the recommendations of the Commission—at least according to their policy speeches. Mr. Lyons has promised to carry out some of the minor recommendations of the Commission, such as providing "better banking facilities for long-term loans for homes and rural holdings . . . and for the finance of small secondary industries." He rejoiced that the Commission dismissed the idea of "nationalisation," but discreetly passed over the Commission's view that the Commonwealth Bank should be in a position to coerce the trading banks into following the general policy laid down by the central bank; he also found it convenient to ignore the Commission's finding, that in the event of irreconcilable difference between the Commonwealth Bank Board and the Government, the Government should have the last word. Needless to say, these views of the Commission were more to the liking of Mr. Curtin, who declared that "the report and recommendations of the Royal Commission on monetary and banking systems were a reinforcement of the Labour Party's views." Therefore, while tacitly dropping all idea of nationalisation of the whole banking system, Mr. Curtin undertook to give the Commonwealth Bank adequate power to control monetary policy, and to give the Commonwealth Government the power to have the last word with regard to that policy if need be. Though there may be a good deal of difference between the attitude of the two parties on this matter, even Mr. Lyons intends, in theory at least, to "strengthen the powers of the Commonwealth Bank, and provide for the better co-ordination of public and private banking"—so that the differences may not turn out to be of great importance.

The same may be true of the question of National Insurance against sickness, old-age, and unemployment, although Mr. Lyons frankly abandoned the idea of insurance against unemployment in his policy speech. Mr. Lyons has merely promised a contributory scheme to provide "benefits during sickness, medical treatment at all times, pensions for widows and orphans, and superannuation." But "relief from the hardships of unemployment" is to be afforded by the Commonwealth in conjunction with the States just as it has been in the past. The promise does not seem to offer a great deal, since the Commonwealth Government would only pay one-third of the contributions to the scheme, and it would eventually be relieved of the cost of meeting old-age and invalid pensions, which it pays to 300,000 people at the present time. National Insurance in Mr. Lyons's hands seems to have become rather a subtle device to make invalids and old people, from the poorest section of the community, pay for their pensions in future, and so perhaps enable the Government to spend more on defence. Mr. Curtin, on the other hand, said nothing about a national scheme of insurance against sickness and old age, but said that "labour would undertake to provide legislation to place unemployment insurance in the realm of achievement, and thereby lay the foundation upon which the nation could develop this principle of social justice. The Labour Party proposed, therefore, to provide £6,000,000 from consolidated revenue for the initiation of the system. Labour thus offered us a scheme for Unemployment Insurance, entirely or mainly at the expense of the Commonwealth as a whole, but evidently intended to leave provision for sickness and old-age as it is at present. This is the exact reverse of Mr.

Lyons's proposal. There was some logic in Mr. Curtin's proposal; it may be fairly argued that insofar as unemployment is an evil due to the defects of our society itself, ~~that~~ therefore the community as a whole should bear the cost of insuring against the evil. A society which fails to provide useful employment, but expects the individual to provide against its failure, is adding insult to injury. Another point in favour of the Commonwealth bearing the whole cost, instead of setting up a contributory scheme, is that the employers' contribution to the scheme would simply increase costs in industry and would be passed on in prices to the consumer where possible. In export industries it would hamper them a little in competition with other countries. But if the cost were met out of taxation on incomes, it would fall on all sections of the community and would have no effect on costs or prices.

But although these differences between the two parties on the matter of national insurance are far from being unimportant, it is doubtful whether they will work out very differently in the long run. The Commonwealth Government might by the one scheme ultimately save some of its expenditure on social services, but it is more likely that before that time was reached ~~that~~ it would be driven by social pressure into insuring individuals against unemployment if it could not put an end to it. Neither of these issues of banking policy or national insurance seems to us of major importance. There are other important social questions which call for attention, but they seem to have received little attention. In spite of economic recovery, the distribution of wealth in Australia remains as unequal and unjust as ever it was; the Census of 1933 even seems to indicate that the inequality of incomes may be increasing. Until we have regular and complete surveys of the distribution of incomes, we cannot be certain of this. We can be certain, however, that the community as a whole would be a great deal better off if taxation were more deliberately used to reduce inequalities in income. Neither party seems keen to suggest such a thing, no doubt thinking that any suggestion to increase taxes would be electorally unwise, although the Labour Party's proposal of non-contributory unemployment insurance, paid for out of taxation, would be a step in this direction. But neither for the general principle of promoting equality of opportunity by further graduated taxation in order to extend social services, nor for a planned provision to abolish slums from our cities throughout the land is there any concrete suggestion from either party.

Nor was the question of a Forty-hour Week a major election issue. Mr. Lyons declared that "the government has never been opposed to the principle of a shorter working week, but he has shown pretty clearly while in office that he is not in a hurry to do anything to bring it about. Mr. Curtin promised to ratify the Forty-Hour International Convention, and to set about applying it to Australia. But this again is a question about which there is no fundamental disagreement—it must come sooner or later; at the moment there is good reason to favour a compromise on a general 44-hour week, for we are not so outrageously wealthy that we can afford to ignore any temporary loss of production through reducing working hours in industry generally in one step to 40 hours a week, since the present average working week in Australia is just over 45 hours. There is also a good deal to be said for a different scale of hours in different industries, and even in different branches of the same industry, according to the type of work to be performed.

One particular issue might have been given a good deal more prominence in the election campaign, at least by one party; the tendency of conservative (might we even say reactionary?) governments since the War to whittle away democratic institutions, such as freedom of speech, free circulation of political literature, freedom of political and industrial organisation, and personal freedom. Naturally, Mr. Lyons carefully avoided any mention of this question in his policy speech, and his government, in the few months before the elections, sought to give the impression of becoming more "liberal." How much such indications are worth may perhaps best be judged by the record of his own and preceding conservative governments. The full story of their repressive legislation and administration since the War has been recorded in two pamphlets published by the Council for Civil Liberties in Melbourne—"The Case Against the Crimes Act" and "Six Acts Against Civil Liberties." Governments which could enact the political sections of the Crimes Act Amendment Act of 1932, which could permit the Minister for Customs to exercise a system of book-censorship by preventing the importation of political and economic books of a radical nature, which could seek to prevent Egon Kisch and Gerald Griffin from landing in Australia to attend an Anti-War Conference, evidently had little real regard for the principles of democracy. It seems fairly plain that Governments which acted in this way only cared for democracy so long as democracy functioned in the "right" way, and would have no great scruples in doing away with the right of workers to combine (as the Transport Workers Act of 1928 did for the waterside workers), and with rights of political organisation. These, it might well be imagined, would go the way that they had gone in Germany and Italy in times of "emergency," if such Governments were in power. But these tendencies went just a little too far when the Minister for the Interior made use of the "dictation test," designed to carry out the White Australia policy, in order to exclude Mrs. Freer. It can only be presumed that the reasons for this action were private and personal, and that Mr. Paterson had been lulled into a sense of false security by previous successes in the practice of repression. We do not credit the story that Mr. Paterson believed there were two things that had never taken root in Australia — hydrophobia and immorality — and that he was determined to keep them both out. It is highly probable that the overwhelming rejection of the Commonwealth Government's proposals in the Marketing and Aviation Referendum early this year was due to a distrust of the Government caused by the Freer case and similar incidents. At any rate, the Government seemed to consider that it would be politic to put on a more "liberal" appearance. In May, the Government dropped its prosecution against the Friends of the Soviet Union, which had been summoned to show cause why it should not be dissolved as an illegal organisation; the ban on Mrs. Freer was lifted, and she entered Australia in July; the Government even announced its intention of amending some of the more objectionable sections of the Crimes Act; the censorship of "literary" books was put into the hands of a non-political Censorship Advisory Board; "political" books, however, were left to the discretion of the Attorney-General. This "change of heart" would have been a little more convincing if it had come earlier, instead of a bare few months before the elections. Possibly it has been due to a large extent to the wisdom of Mr. Menzies, the Attorney-General, who has consistently shown a more liberal disposition than any of his colleagues. Mr. Menzies has, on more than one occasion, declared his attachment to democratic institutions, and urged us to defend and safeguard them. Would that we had a little more of them to safeguard and defend! Actually, those who have the cause of democracy at heart have had little reason for satisfaction at the attitude of the two major parties towards democratic institutions since the War. Labour, which should be jealous in defence of rights of political and industrial organisation, in its own interests, if for no higher reason, has too frequently appeared rather tolerant of repression so long as it was directed at Communists and their sympathisers. It seems to have made no effort to amend the Crimes Act when in office. Such an attitude may perhaps be explained by the vicious and stupid criticism which Labour has so often suffered at their hands, but this does not justify any curtailment of democratic rights. Labour cannot afford to permit any precedents in this direction, which might possibly be turned against themselves later on. Is it possible that in this matter clerical influences have triumphed over their better judgment? Let us grant that the Communists and their sympathisers have been stupid and irritating, and, moreover, that they do not really believe in political democracy. Yet democracy requires "toleration for the thought we hate," and can hardly survive any violation of this principle. One might be justified in thinking that the Communist minority was insignificant and impotent enough in Australia for the two major political parties to ignore it completely. Instead of which we have had the nauseating spectacle of both parties trying to convict the other of getting support from the Communists!

However, one may hope that Labour, at any rate, will outgrow this weakness; the habit seems too deeply ingrained in the Conservative parties to be easily changed. We have had a clear declaration from the leader of the Labour Party that "if returned to power Labour would repeal those penal laws which denied the elementary rights of free discussion and free assemblage, limited the political and industrial action of Labour and created a censorship of political and economic literature." This is the most heartening declaration we have had on the subject for many a long day, and it even appears that Mr. Lyons has been constrained to adopt a more "liberal" attitude; in answer to a question at Wagga (29th September, 1937), he seems to have promised amendment of those provisions of the Crimes Act which throw the onus of proving innocence on the defendant. Mr. Lyons would have to do a great deal more than that, however, if we are to regain the measure of democracy that we had in Australia before 1914.

* * * *

The various issues so far discussed provide material enough for any election campaign, but they were in fact thrown into the background on this occasion by the question of what shall be Australia's policy with regard to defence, the Empire and international affairs. In this country, as in most others, domestic politics are at present subordinate to international politics, and it is being recognised that our future as a nation hinges very largely on our relations with other nations. The steady deterioration of the international situation since 1930, and in particular the growing tension between Great Britain and Italy, have forced Australians to realise that external policy is no longer something they can comfortably ignore. With war apparently just round the corner in Europe, the question which many people in Australia are asking themselves is: what are we going to do about it next time? Is Australia to be automatically involved in the approaching European conflict as Britain's camp-follower, or can we, and should we, take steps to keep out of it? This question has long been debated in an academic way; but it is now, as a scrutiny of current election policies will show, a matter of practical politics, and one on which there appears to be a real cleavage of opinion between the parties.

Mr. Lyons has left no doubt as to where his Government stands with regard to the Empire and world peace. "This election," he has said, "is being held at a time when the international situation is most ominous. Amid the turmoil the British Commonwealth of Nations is united in exerting its mighty influence on the side of peace and international amity. We in Australia have stood side by side with Great Britain in her policy, because we know that she has no aggressive designs, but is unwillingly re-arming in order that in a world where force rules her counsels may be heard and respected. Our policy is the pursuit of peace and avoidance of war. Our motto is "Security at home and abroad." But we cannot shut our eyes to the fact that there are aggressive nations who may attempt to disturb our peace. Thus it is that self-reliance, adequate defence, and the utmost development of our resources and strength must form the foundation of any national Australian policy for years to come.

Nobody could complain that this statement is in any way obscure: on the contrary, in it Mr. Lyons has nailed his colours to the mast in a manner which allows no misunderstanding. It is clear, first of all, that the present Government intends to make preparations for an emergency its prime object, and that this will involve the maintenance of the existing heavy expenditure on armaments, the encouragement of immigration, and the stimulation of home production by means of maternity bonuses. It is patent, too, that Mr. Lyons has no intention of pursuing an Isolationist policy: if he has anything to say in the matter, Australia will continue to stand where she has stood since Federation—four square on the Imperial connection, and shoulder to shoulder with Great Britain on any major international issue. Nor is it difficult to see that this implies, as the third feature of the Government's external policy, the maintenance of the Ottawa pact and of the present policy of discrimination against non-Imperial goods. Lancashire is still to be preferred to Japan, and Buy British will remain the official slogan.

There is no challenge in Australia to the Nationalist side of this programme: it is generally, although perhaps regretfully, agreed that we must resign ourselves to spending millions on defence, and that in this respect self-reliance must be our motto. It is recognised that in the next war Great Britain is unlikely to enjoy the naval supremacy she had in 1914, and that Australia must accordingly be prepared to look after herself in an emergency and to protect herself against the strongest likely aggressor. It is also pretty widely agreed, as a corollary to this, that an acceleration in the rate of population increase is distinctly desirable, although there is bound to be hostility in certain quarters to any large-scale encouragement of immigration. Where the division of opinion emerges is on the Government's patent intention to maintain the traditional alliance—*mésalliance,* some would call it—between Australian Nationalism and British Imperialism. On this issue—the most fundamental issue in Australian politics to-day—Mr. Lyons's views are not finding such widespread acceptance. Not that there is much positive hostility to them, for it is certain that only a few people are inspired by the spirit of self-conscious, hundred per cent. Isolationism such as that, say, which P. R. Stephensen has systematically preached during the past few years. But against these few must be ranged the many who, for one reason or another, consciously or unconsciously, are beginning to doubt whether the Commonwealth will gain any material advantage from a further stressing of the Imperial connection.

The most obvious ground for doubt is that of Imperial preference. Last year, it will be remembered, the Government decided upon a drastic increase in the rate of duties on Japanese textiles, and the public reaction was remarkable: not only the economists, but most of the leading newspapers condemned the decision as gratuitously and criminally stupid. Here was a Government, which for years had been endeavouring, with apparent success, to establish friendly relations with Australia's most dangerous potential enemy throwing away the fruits of its endeavour in one fell swoop. People were shocked, and some of them did not hesitate to say so. Their indignation may have been transitory—certainly it was ineffective; but while it lasted it demonstrated two things, first, that attachment to the Ottawa policy was by no means universal, and, secondly, that there was real depth to the desire felt by many to see friendship with Japan one of the cardinal aims of Australia's foreign policy. It is worth noting on this point that even now, after the horrors of Shanghai and Nanking, the clamour for a boycott of Japanese goods has met with little response from public opinion in this country.

It is not surprising, then, to find that the Labour Party's policy diverged quite considerably from that of Mr. Lyons. Mr. Curtin is no pacifist: like Mr. Lyons, he feels that Australia must defend herself if attacked, and that steps must be taken to put her in a position to defend herself. But as he reads it, self-defence does not necessarily mean fighting Great Britain's wars for her: in fact, it might mean just the opposite. "The safety of Australia and the peace of the nation being our fundamental obligation, we insist that the country shall not be committeed to warlike activities *outside Australia* without the absolute and established consent of the Australian people." Note the implication—in certain circumstances participation in hostilities outside Australia might be the surest way not of securing but of endangering the national safety. Mr. Curtin's idea, in fact, is that Australia should think of herself first, last and all the time, and that her external policy should be framed in accordance with her own needs, not those of Great Britain. He admits that we cannot afford a navy of the size necessary for our own defence, but he is convinced that by concentrating on a strong and efficient aerial defence we can make ourselves practically invulnerable to attack. This, in essence, is Labour's defence policy; a policy of military Isolationism. "It is foolish to say that Australia can sustain a sea-going navy adequate to Australia's need. The strength of Australian defence must now lie in aviation. Aerial defence represents one of the features of the Australian defence services which Australia will develop and strengthen to the utmost efficiency, while at the same time it will maintain our land and shore organisation at the highest strength within our power and resources." This policy, together with Labour's insistence that Australia should not be committed to external wars without the express consent of her people, comes very close to the policy of Australian Nationalism advocated with such vigour by P. R. Stephensen. There is very little doubt that the Australian people, as a whole, would not sanction participation in external wars, and if Labour is given power, Stephensen's slogans for the next great war —"Australia First," and "Don't Go! Australia Will Be Here!"— would be put into practice. As between blind support of British Imperialism and Australian Nationalism of this kind, there is everything to be said for Australian Nationalism.

But the problem does not end there. Such a policy means that we must develop our internal resources to be self-reliant in case we are attacked. Both Labour and Conservatives propose to do this, but for rather different reasons and aims. Although Labour's policy may save us from participation in external wars, it may prove to be nearly as expensive to carry out as that of their political opponents, unless the policy of military Isolationism is coupled with some kind of Internationalism. In a world in which we have relations with other countries, and live largely by world trade, we cannot pretend that our national policy is a domestic matter and entirely our own concern, on matters such as tariffs, migration and trade policy. If we put undue obstacles in the way of trade with other countries we will create bad feeling, and we will have to spend more on defence. If we have to resist aggression, let us do it with "clean hands and a pure heart," strong in the belief that we, for our part at any rate, have not been guilty of provoking the attack. In the past Labour has been far too ready to employ tariffs in haphazard and indiscriminate manner. It ought to be realised that tariffs are a capitalist weapon dear to competing national groups. If it is desirable to develop certain branches of national industry it is possible to do so without indiscriminate use of tariffs, which impose the heaviest burdens upon the poorest people and create all sorts of internal and external problems. Labour, above all, ought to undertake an inquiry to discover the burden of the tariff on small incomes; then it might lose some of its affection for this antiquated and clumsy blunderbuss.

Placed as we are in Australia, we should encourage trade with all countries, especially those round the Pacific, and not only with England and the Empire. If we refuse to trade with other countries, then we must recognise our share of guilt for such events as Italy's conquest of Abyssinia, Japan's aggression in China, and the breakdown of all semblance of an international system of law. It is encouraging that Mr. Curtin in his policy speech denounced the recent trade discrimination policy against Japan and the United States as "foolish" and "the cause of friction and complications," and that he promised no discrimination as between foreign countries. It is not so heartening that he still supports "preference to the United Kingdom and our sister Dominions." For the whole policy of Ottawa and preferences to the Empire is not only economically harmful to Australia, but is a part of the bungling policy of British Imperialism in the post-war era that has helped to produce the present international anarchy. There are indications that Mr. Curtin has an inkling of this when he says: "As a first principle (of defence) Labour declared that Australia should aim at the establishment and maintenance of friendly relations with all other countries, and should not be provocative in its international policies and contacts." But if Labour really wishes to do this it could do nothing more useful than sweep away the whole of the existing preferences to Great Britain in the Australian market. We know that if Mr. Lyons's Government is returned to office the whole system of Imperial preference will be maintained, and even if the terms of the present Ottawa agreement may be revised, as Mr. Lyons has hinted, the system in general will remain intact. If Dr. Page has his way, the system will be even further extended. Labour, on the other hand, is not committed to the extravagances of the Ottawa system. Though it may be pledged to maintaining preferences to the Empire, it could make a useful beginning by reducing the margin of preferences, as a gesture of goodwill to other countries. When it had seen the good results of that, it could then abolish them altogether.

This then, I suggest, would be the best policy that Australia could follow in the present fateful moment of her history. We should reject entirely any idea of blind support for British Imperialism; we should eschew any idea of external commitments other than a formal representation on the nominal League of Nations. If that organisation showed any convincing signs of becoming a real instrument for promoting world peace by removing causes of discontent and unrest, and by setting up an effective system of collective security, then we could give it hearty support. At the present time there is no such tendency to support, and Australia's best policy in a system of international anarchy is military Isolationism with a very strong dash of Economic Internationalism. If we can adopt this policy in external affairs, then we shall have a reasonable chance of getting the necessary atmosphere of peace and security in which to tackle our serious internal problems.

AERE PERENNIUS?

By ANDREW GARRAN.

> *"I think that the business of devising the Balfour Declaration in 1926, and the business of devising and drafting the preamble of the Statute of Westminster in 1931 were both open to very grave criticism."*—The Rt. Hon. R. G. Menzies, Commonwealth Hansard, 25th August, 1937, p. 92.

ENACTED ostensibly to give effect to the Balfour Declaration of Liberty, Equality, Autonomy, the Statute of Westminster deals with three different matters.

In the first place, it removes, so far as concerns the Dominions, the restrictions of the Colonial Laws Validity Act. Dominion legislation is no longer to be invalidated by the fact that it is repugnant to an Imperial Act, and Dominion legislation may amend or repeal any Imperial Act in its application to the Dominion. So far this provision of the Statute has attracted more attention than any other. But now that the Irish Free State has availed itself of the provision to establish itself virtually as a republic, and Canada and South Africa have with the aid of the provision satisfied their present national aspirations, more attention may be given to the rest of the Statute.

Secondly, it declares that Dominion parliaments have full power to make laws having extra-territorial operation. The Privy Council and the High Court of Australia have reached similar conclusions independently of the Statute, so this provision may be treated as merely declaratory.

Thirdly, it prescribes the conditions subject to which an alteration may be made in the law touching the succession to the throne or in the royal style and titles, and the conditions on which an Act of the Imperial Parliament will extend to a Dominion as part of the law thereof.

Only this third provision is discussed in this article. It appears in two recitals of the preamble, the second of which has a statutory counterpart in section 4 of the Statute.

At this stage it may be stated that, while the preamble of the Statute has effect with respect to all the Dominions, section 4 of the Statute has effect with respect only to Canada, South Africa and the Irish Free State. Australia and New Zealand have not adopted that section. Newfoundland has temporarily, through financial distress, surrendered her Dominion status. Emphasis must also be given to the fact that the recitals of the preamble of the Statute have legislative effect. This has been well expressed by the Chief Justice of the High Court of Australia in a considered dictum—"The fact that the Commonwealth has not availed itself of the provisions of section 10 (of the Statute) by adopting sections 2, 3, 4, 5, or 6 does not prevent the rest of the Act, including the preamble, from being legislation which extends to the Commonwealth of Australia."

The preamble of the Statute recites—

> "And whereas it is meet and proper to set out by way of preamble to this Act that, inasmuch as the Crown is the symbol of the free association of the members of the British Commonwealth of Nations, and as they are united by a common allegiance to the Crown, it would be in accord with the established constitutional position of all the members of the Commonwealth in relation to one another that any alteration in the law touching the Succession to the Throne or the Royal Style and Titles shall hereafter require *the assent as well of the Parliaments of all the Dominions as of the Parliament of the United Kingdom.*"

This recital deals with a question which, when the Statute was passed, had never arisen in practice. Prior to the Statute the last alteration of the law touching the succession to the Throne was the Act of Settlement of 1701, as varied in 1707 and 1800 on the Unions with Scotland and Ireland. On the other hand, the royal style and titles were altered in 1927 in accordance with a decision of the Imperial Conference of 1926. But the Statute boldly purports to regulate both these matters for the future on lines that "would be in accord with the established constitutional position."

The preamble continues—

> "And whereas it is in accord with the established constitutional position that no law hereafter made by the Parliament of the United Kingdom shall extend to any of the said Dominions as part of the law of that Dominion otherwise than *at the request and with the consent of that Dominion.*"

The statutory counterpart of this second recital appears in section 4 of the Statute which provides that—

> "No Act of the Parliament of the United Kingdom passed after the commencement of this Act shall extend, or be deemed to extend, to a Dominion as part of the law of that Dominion, unless it is expressly declared in that Act that that *Dominion has requested, and consented* to, the enactment thereof."

This second recital and section 4 deal with a question by no means new. Prior to the Statute, the practice had grown of consulting the Dominions before legislating for them. But the exact extent of the practice had never been defined. The recital purports to define the practice "in accord with the established constitutional position." Section 4 goes further than the recital in that it requires express declaration in the Imperial Act of the request and consent of the Dominion to the enactment thereof.

These two recitals of the preamble and section 4 of the Statute will now be discussed with reference to recent events and recent legislation.

On the tenth day of December, 1936, King Edward VIII signed a declaration of his irrevocable intention to abdicate and desired effect to be given thereto immediately. If there had been no Statute of Westminster, the matter would have been straightforward. No doubt the Dominions would have been informed of, and the Governments of the Dominions would have agreed to, the general terms of the necessary Imperial legislation. But if the Statute was to be observed, England and the Dominions had to play their respective allotted parts.

The Imperial Parliament, with the object of giving effect to the declaration of abdication, forthwith passed His Majesty's Declaration of Abdication Act 1936.

The preamble of that Act recites—

> "And whereas, following upon the communication to His Dominions of His Majesty's said declaration and desire, the Dominion of *Canada,* pursuant to the provisions of section four of the Statute of Westminster, 1931, has *requested and consented* to the enactment of this Act, and the Commonwealth of *Australia,* the Dominion of *New Zealand, and* the Union of *South Africa* have *assented* thereto."

This recital, both because of what is said and because of what is left unsaid, is full of interest, and here the reader must turn to the extracts from the Statute of Westminister and the Abdication Act set out above, with special attention to the passages which have been italicised therein for the purposes of this article.

First, as to what is left unsaid.—There is no mention of the Irish Free State. Also there is no reference to *Parliamentary* assent. In Australia, Parliament gave the assent, in New Zealand and South Africa the Government assented, and in Canada the Government requested and consented.

Next, as to what is said.—It will be observed that "*Canada* pursuant to section four of the Statute of Westminster has *requested and consented* to the enactment of" the Abdication Act. The legal implication of this is that Canada acted on the assumption that the abdication concerned a law of the United Kingdom, which extended to Canada as part of the law of that Dominion. But it will also be observed that "the Commonwealth of *Australia,* the Dominion of *New Zealand* and the Union of *South Africa* have *assented* thereto." The legal implication of this is that those three Dominions acted on the assumption that the abdication concerned the alteration of the law touching the succession to the throne.

It is true that the Irish Free State, Canada and South Africa subsequently passed Acts which, by diverse methods, aimed at securing that George VI should wear the Crown (so far, in the case of Ireland, as the Crown was retained). Up to the time of writing, the Parliament of New Zealand has passed no Act or resolution concerning the abdication. The numerous difficulties, mostly highly technical, that arise from this Dominion legislation cannot be discussed within the scope of this article. It must suffice to state that not the least of these difficulties is that, assuming that the Dominion Parliaments had power to pass the legislation and that the legislation had some effect beyond or other than that of the Abdication Act, for short periods there were different Kings for different Dominions and, probably, two contemporary Kings for certain of the Dominions with powers divided by an imaginary line —a truly Gilbertian situation!

There seems to be no doubt that the Abdication Act purported not only to alter the law of the succession to the throne, but also to extend to the Dominions as part of the law thereof. That being so, if the Statute of Westminster was to be observed, the Imperial Act required the *assent of the Parliaments of all* the Dominions to alter the law of the succession, and the *request and consent* of the Dominions (and in the case of Ireland, Canada, and South Africa, a declaration in the Imperial Act that those Dominions had so requested and consented) to extend to the Dominions as part of the law thereof.

These requirements were not fulfilled except in so far as Canada "requested and consented" (and, ironically, Canada considered that no legal implications flowed from her request and consent).

It appears that if the de facto abdication was accomplished legally throughout the Empire, it was because the requirements of the preamble and section 4 of the Statute as to the form of certain legislation are binding on the British Parliament to the extent only that where a subsequent Act does not observe those requirements, that Act will be limited in operation accordingly (e.g., it will not extend to a Dominion), unless the requirements of the Statute are expressly or by necessary implication negatives. This is in accord with established English rules of statutory interpretation and is, it is submitted, the proper and only basis on which the legality and uniformity of the abdication can be defended. In other words, the abdication was constitutional, despite, and not because of, the Statute of Westminster.

In the Abdication Act there was no express negation of the operation of the Statute of Westminster; on the contrary, the preamble of the Act appears to presume that the requirements of the Statute were being observed. But it seems that, inasmuch as the Act purports to alter the law touching the succession to the throne without the assent of the Parliaments of all the Dominions, there must be read into the Act an implied negation of the requirements of the Statute as to such assent, for otherwise the Act would have no effect at all, not even for the United Kingdom. Once it is admitted that, notwithstanding the Statute, the Act alters the law touching the succession for the United Kingdom it is an easy step to the proposition that, notwithstanding the Statute, the Act extends to the Dominions as part of the law thereof. Australia and New Zealand appear to be satisfied that the Act so extends. It seems that Canada, South Africa, and Ireland prefer to rely on their own legislation. The view of the United Kingdom on this question is uncertain.

Consider next the Regency Act 1937, which was passed, as the preamble recites, on the recommendation of King George VI that provision should be made for the exercise of the royal functions by a regent in certain events. The "royal functions" are defined by the Act to include "all powers and authorities belonging to the Crown, whether prerogative or statutory, together with the receiving of any homage required to be done to His Majesty."

There seems to be no doubt that the law as to regency is capable of extension to the Dominions as part of the law thereof. If the Regency Act was intended so to extend, section 4 of the Statute of Westminster should have been observed in the case of Canada, South Africa, and the Irish Free State, and the corresponding recital of the preamble in the case of Australia and New Zealand. This was not done. Sir John Simon, in moving the second reading of the Bill, said:—

> "The Bill will be effective, when it becomes an Act, in the United Kingdom and in the Colonies. So far as the Dominions are concerned, it will be for each Dominion Government to decide whether any legislation is necessary . . . . On this occasion we are deliberately following different lines from those that we followed in the Abdication Act of last December . . . . After consultation with the Dominions it is agreed that it would be better and simpler to take the course of legislating here and now in the United Kingdom Parliament in the terms of the Bill before the House, and of recognising that the Dominions would prefer to take no positive action unless and until the occasion arises which seems to make it necessary."

If the Regency Act was not intended to apply to the Dominions the position should have been made certain by express provision restricting the application of the Act. Indeed, if the Abdication Act extends to the Dominions, it is difficult to see why the Regency Act does not so extend. It is true that most of the royal functions relating to the Dominions are performed in the Dominions by the Governors-General, but some are not; for example, under most of the Dominion Constitutions Governors-General are appointed by the King. Now the Regency Act provides that in certain cases all powers and authorities of the Crown, whether prerogative or statutory, shall be performed by a regent in the name and on behalf of the Sovereign. It is submitted that the effect of this specific provision is that notwithstanding the Statute of Westminster the power to appoint Dominion Governors-General and to perform other royal functions in relation to the Dominions is during a regency transferred to the regent. This conclusion is reached after some doubt in view of the statement of Sir John Simon referred to above. But the more the problem is considered the more certain it appears that the "better and simpler" course referred to by Sir John Simon was a course politically better and simpler—the avoidance of the difficulties that arose from divergent Dominion practice and views in the case of the Abdication Act.

It is unfortunate that so important a matter as the establishment of a regency should have been deliberately placed in a position so full of doubt, especially as a path has been opened for different interpretations and divergent practices throughout the Empire. Moreover, it may be noted that the Commonwealth of Australia has no power to pass legislation providing for a regency.

Sufficient has been said to indicate some of the difficulties that have resulted from the discovery of established constitutional positions and rules in accord therewith and their incorporation in the Statute of Westminster. It may be argued that such difficulties arise from overmuch stress being placed on the actual words of the Statute. But in statutory interpretation this is inevitable—if it was to be avoided, the rules should never have been incorporated in the Statute, but should have been left less rigid, though perhaps no less established. Moreover the difficulties raised in this article are far from being exhaustive. I have tried to keep the article to one straight path in a labyrinth of difficulties.

In conclusion, a case of a different nature may be mentioned. While it may be accepted as an established convention that the British Parliament will not, unless requested, legislate either for a State or for the Commonwealth of Australia, yet the Statute of Westminster gives statutory effect to this rule only so far as the Commonwealth is concerned. Nevertheless, the rights of the States, though not protected by the Statute, remain and should be observed equally with those of the Commonwealth. The British Parliament recently passed the Geneva Convention Act 1937 to give effect to an article of an international convention regulating the use of the red cross and the Geneva cross. One section of that Act expressly empowers the Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia to legislate on the matter for Australia. This in effect altered the Commonwealth Constitution by giving to the Commonwealth certain powers apparently previously exercisable only by the States. The enactment of the section by the British Parliament was requested by the Commonwealth, but the States were not consulted by either the English or the Commonwealth authorities. When the noble Lord in charge of the Bill in the House of Lords was asked why the British Parliament was presuming to legislate for Australia, he replied: "I am advised that this is one of the consequences of the precise way in which the Statute of Westminster was drawn." Is the smoke screen of the Statute of Westminster to loom so large in the eyes of the Imperial authorities as to blot out the rights of the States of Australia?

CAN THESE BONES LIVE?

A PROBLEM IN EDUCATION

By N. H. MacNeil.

THE New Educational Fellowship Conference has come and gone. As Dr. Norwood pointed out, the gnat has stung and buzzed off. If the intention of the Conference was to provoke discussion, it has achieved its purpose.

It may be said with some confidence that the majority of those who attended the meetings were either stimulated, or provoked, or both. It may also be said that the Conference did some constructive work, despite the strictures of the critics. To object that nothing new was disclosed is to suggest that in educational theory and practice, hidden away somewhere, is some unsuspected principle which when discovered will cause us to jettison all the old notions hitherto held. Yet the essential problems and aims of education do not vary, though their background may. The principles of education are age-long principles, as old as man himself. Discoveries in education, therefore, are concerned not so much with finding things out as with shifting emphasis and correcting attitudes, and not least with the re-capturing of the vision that at some time or other every educator has seen.

To those in touch with the Conference four great principles seemed to emerge: that the teacher must be as free as it is possible to make him; that education is as wide as life itself; that the pupil's studies must be real to him; that progress in education should be assessed by record, not by external examination.

It does not require a very acute mind to see that these four principles are of fundamental importance. Yet by themselves they are dry and inanimate. They are merely the bones lying in the valley. What is wanted is a man of faith who can breathe into these bones the breath of life. The problem is: Can these bones live?

Perhaps there are many who do not see any particular reason why they should live. To give them life might raise up a very troublesome host; it would certainly entail a great deal of work making arrangements for their accommodation. The immediate task, then, is to examine these principles and see what they mean, beginning with the principle of freedom for the teacher.

It is some comfort to be able to say at the outset that, if faults exists in our educational systems, they cannot be laid to anybody's charge. They are there because our history has put them there. They are largely the result of our centralised systems of education, which, in the early years of our existence as a people placed schools in districts where local resources were far too feeble to build them.

It was inevitable that outlying communities should look for direction to the centre. Hence there has grown up a strong centralised Department of Education in every State, competent beyond dispute, and staffed by men who have the best intentions. From the administrative point of view, the Department can do almost anything, except make the most of its chances. It has yet to learn that to get the best out of people it is necessary to throw responsibility upon them. The teacher under the Department is not trusted as he should be; the system is constructed rather to catch the lazy man than to give the energetic man the freedom to develop his particular gifts.

It is strange to find this highly centralised system in a democratic State, where we should expect to find the variety and opportunity that are consistent with democratic forms. France has made the same curious mistake. The ghost of Napoleon still sits crowned upon her educational system, which in some way or other escaped the attentions of the reformers of the Third Republic. Naturally enough, criticism is being levelled at a system that is not consistent with democracy. In Australia, too, it must be recognised that education and governmental methods must march side by side; otherwise there is in the State a fundamental weakness. It is merely common sense to make our administration match our political faith, which is democracy. If democracy is failing, is it by any chance because we are not democratic at the most critical point of our training?

It may be objected that a centralised system of administration need not affect democratic practice; but in actual practice it does. Let us examine some of the effects of centralisation. Its most characteristic mark is uniformity and a strong set towards mass-production. There is no other way in which a vast centralised organisation can avoid confusion. The syllabus of work and the inspectorate are a confession of this weakness. The teacher has little chance of experimenting or of adapting his curriculum to his environment. It is a matter of concern to the educational authorities that men of ability are leaving the educational service that they may find employment where their abilities have more scope. In some cases this means a drift to headquarters and away from the actual work of teaching; in other cases it means that good teachers are lost to the profession altogether. The experience of the United States suggests that the time may come when through lack of men-teachers most of our boys will be taught by women. It does not seem to be too much to ask that, if we wish men to stick to the job of teaching, we must make teaching a man's job. Unfortunately, the rigidity of the system is intensified by external examinations that make teachers hew to a line and inspectors classify them according to their success in so doing.

Yet, if democracy means anything, it must mean that the worth of the individual should never be forgotten. The individual contribution is the stuff of which democracy is made. We cannot get sturdy opinions unless we train pupils and teachers to form them.

Instead of being afraid of variety, we should encourage it. It is hard to see how this state of affairs can come about, unless the central authority divests itself of some of its powers. Local authorities should be encouraged to undertake responsible functions wherever possible. It is not so much a question of centralisation or de-centralisation, but of how much centralisation and how much de-centralisation. The important thing is that the central authority should be on the lookout for chances of encouraging local activity, an attitude that should entail more than the setting up of Parents' and Citizens' Associations.

In this respect the English system seems to contain a valuable lesson for us. There are over three hundred local authorities in England, all under the benevolent supervision of the Board of Education in London, yet all with real authority. This Board throws on the local authorities the work of devising their own educational systems. It is significant that under this arrangement there is not in the whole of England a single printed syllabus. In place of a syllabus there is a book of suggestions, in which is set forth not only the freedom, but the duty of the teacher to devise his syllabus to meet the conditions in which he finds himself. The inspectors there do not classify teachers in a numerical scale, but rather regard themselves as "peripatetic professors of education," spreading new ideas and viewpoints. The consequence is that in England are found that liveliness and variety that should distinguish democratic communities.

This recognition of the influence of environment on education and this insistence that the teacher should bring his teaching into contact with the life around him leads us quite naturally to the second principle which the new education seeks to promote: that education is as wide as life itself.

There has been a strange restriction of education to book learning, a restriction that can be traced to the old Church and Cathedral schools which sought to train learned clerks for the service of the Church itself. The new education is simply recalling us to the old Greek conception, that the child must be developed in every faculty of body, mind, character, and spirit. Our external examination systems have riveted upon the popular mind the notion that learning is the thing that matters. They test what has been absorbed; but they make no pretence to evaluate the worth of character or of physical excellence. The advantages that accrue to schools showing an imposing pass list in the external examinations, have not escaped the notice of school authorities. The consequence has been that education has lost its balance, and has become a quest for external certificates.

Herein, of course, lies the chief reason for the substitution of the school record as a means of estimating the success of a school career. The record could take into consideration every aspect of a pupil's life at school. It would cover not only book learning, but also those things that cannot be tested in a written examination.

Its accumulated evidence would show clearly all evidences of character, initiative, perseverance, sensibility and reliability that a pupil possesses.

Those who object to a scheme such as this, always express the opinion that such a certificate is worthless, since the verdict of the schoolmaster is not to be trusted. It is interesting to conjecture whom such people do trust. Do they trust their baker and their domestic servants? Or do they move through life in an atmosphere of suspicion? The only relevant answer to such objectors is that they must trust the schoolmaster, for the simple reason that we should never get anywhere if we did not trust our fellow-men. It is certain that without so doing we can never get the best out of them. It is also certain that only through confidence in its teachers can the Department re-invest education with its full scope and significance. If it continues to follow the existing practice, the content of education as practised in the schools will progressively dwindle, till education becomes merely a matter of examination technique.

It is precisely against this growing technique that the third principle above-mentioned has been formulated. To claim that a pupil's studies must be real to him calls attention to the increasing element of unreality that is attending school work under the artificial conditions of the external examination system. Why is it that so often pupils who do badly in external examinations do so well in after life? This in itself should make us pause and think. Is it possible that our examinations are not testing the most important things? Or is it because many of the best pupils, feeling that school work has not much to do with life, lose interest in it? It can be conceded very readily that most pupils, by the element of competition in the external examination, are prompted to work hard to pass the examination in question; but it can equally well be pointed out that most pupils quickly drop their school work as soon as they can. In all these cases, therefore, there is lurking the suggestion that many pupils feel that school work has not much to do with life.

The new education does make this appeal: that education must give the pupil a hold on the business of living. Such a conception of the function of education must perforce pass every school subject and activity in review, and decide how far they serve the purpose of education so conceived.

Possibly the greatest bugbear of our secondary education is the assumption that all pupils at secondary schools are going on to the University. From this assumption, secondary school subjects derive a treatment that is essentially academic in character. A high theoretical content is introduced from the very beginning, and their practical application is neglected. A subject studied for use at the University is apt to be carried on as pure theory till years later the student finds that it has a practical application to his professional activities. He can then see that what he has learnt has value after all. But what is the plight of the secondary pupil who never reaches the stage where he may see the theories applied? His course of study is a truncated affair, carrying him to no destination, but leaving him stranded half-way to somewhere.

Our secondary courses are full of instances of this kind. The Intermediate Certificate course in New South Wales is as good an example as any. It is confessedly a Leaving Certificate with the last two years cut off. If it means anything, it means to certify that a pupil who takes it is half-baked. There is no attempt made to round the course off and give the pupil a feeling that he has reached a vantage ground, or that he is in possession of a co-ordinated body of knowledge. The real significance of the fact that the vast majority of pupils leave school by fifteen years of age is entirely overlooked.

It follows, then, that school courses should be designed with two objectives, one bearing in mind the pupil who is leaving at about the age of fifteen, and the other recognising that certain specialists are going further. The only arrangement that can embrace both objectives is one that sets up a general course for all pupils up to the age of fifteen or sixteen, and a further course for those who wish to devote themselves to specialised studies. The first-named course should be an entity in itself. It should gather up all the loose ends. Its content should have immediate meaning for the pupil. It should touch and illuminate the things that are around him, his own body, the society in which he lives, its daily transactions, and what it expects of him. It should be free from any connection with University Matriculation requirements. The idea of wading through a mass of theory in order that at the end it may all be shown to have a meaning, should be given up. It is much better educational practice to begin with the practical and work towards the theoretical.

Realism in studies so conceived would have a very great effect on the choice and arrangement of school studies, whether languages, mathematics, or science. It would also give prominence to other studies that have hitherto been neglected, particularly the physical and the artistic. These could be admitted to the curriculum owing to the curtailing of the subject-matter of many of the subjects studied at the present time.

With the fate of the specialist we are not so much concerned here. He will be no worse off for having done a general course at the outset and, moreover, he will be much more sure of his selection of the subjects in which he wishes to specialise than he would have been at an earlier age. Indeed, one of the weakest points of the present system is the need of deciding at twelve or thirteen years whether a pupil is going on to the University and so requires to specialise in certain subjects.

The quest for realism, however, is vitally concerned with the fourth of the principles which we are considering. Realism depends on the reality and freshness of the contacts which a pupil makes with the life around him; but it is very doubtful whether such realism can survive the formalism that is bound to assert itself in an external examination.

There was a time when there were no external examinations. The mood that demands them is a reflection of the mechanised spirit of the age that favours categories and believes in mass-production. Men have come to believe that human beings can be checked and classified like spare parts. Those who believe that the highest values in life reside in the individual must continue to demand that the individual must be treated as such. This is the question that is dividing the world to-day into two camps, totalitarian and democratic. In Australia we should be committed to support the latter view of life. The point at which we can lend it the most effective aid is in the schools. We should look twice at every influence that makes for standardisation and favours sameness.

The external examination tends steadily to distract attention from the purpose of education, and to focus it upon the business of passing the examination. When teachers, pupils and parents are all judged by the community on their success or failure in respect of the external examination, it may be taken for granted that every resource of wit and experience will be enlisted to defeat the examiner in his task. The increasing formalism of the examination and its gradual approach to predictability favour the teacher who teaches with his eye upon its requirements, and handicaps the teacher who teaches on more liberal lines. Thus there is a growing tendency for the pupil to rely on the teacher's opinions, and to produce these in the examination as his own. In this there is a radical element of dishonesty that must, in the long run, tend to impair the pupil's mental integrity and critical ability.

Not only, then, is the examination unreliable in its indication of the pupil's calibre; the examiners themselves are unreliable, too. The recent publication of "An Examination of Examinations" has set the educational world talking. In a group of experienced and competent examiners the same paper was placed near the head of the list by one and at the bottom by another. The same paper, examined by one examiner at the beginning of the year and placed high, was examined by the same man at the end of the year and placed low. This experience was repeated so often that the investigators were compelled to report that success in an external examination depended largely on luck; and that very often all that the examination seemed to test was a sympathy between the candidate and the examiner; and even that depended, apparently, on the mood of the examiner. It can be concluded, therefore, that the verdict on the usual type of question in an examination is a matter of opinion. We are compelled to ask ourselves whether examinations held externally test accurately even the small section of a pupil's education that they are supposed to cover.

When the many-sided nature of a pupil's education is considered, it seems strange that so much emphasis is laid on what, after all, is a very small section of it. The external examination emphasises, first and foremost, memory; speed comes next in importance, whether of thought or of execution; and lastly comes self-control—the refusal to become flustered. Except in the matter of self-control, the wide field of character is unexamined. Is the pupil honest? Is he persevering? Is he reliable? Can he take responsibility? Has he any initiative? Is he plucky? We do not know. The fundamental importance of physical fitness is ignored. Is he strong? Is he vigorous? Can he discipline himself? Is his eyesight good? Has he at any time overcome any physical defect? We do not know. All we do know is that at a certain time he has passed a written examination in certain subjects.

It is surprising that, despite such serious omissions, faith is still reposed in the external examination. It does not seem unreasonable to ask that a more comprehensive and reliable means should be found by which a pupil should be judged. Some evidence of the nature of a pupil's life at school is useful. It keeps before the pupil the fact that what he does at school is related to the life before him; and it should be of value in getting him into a congenial occupation. Thus the certificate that he bears with him should be as comprehensive as possible. It should, in other words, be nothing more or less than his school record together with the opinion of the Headmaster and the Common-room.

The objection raised to such a scheme is always the same: Under such an arrangement how can a standard be kept? The answer is threefold. First, we have shown that an accurate standard cannot be kept under any arrangement. The information on the record is therefore of more importance. Second, the school soon sets its own general standard, which is well-known in the community. Third, adequate safeguards, if such are required, could be provided by the Universities.

The Conference, then, has opened up some wide perspectives. It has been critical, good-humoured, and constructive. We can already dimly see the frame of the education of the future. Who will give it life?

TOO MANY LECTURES

By L. C. WILCHER

"It is up to you," said a member of the editorial committee, "to write an article yourself."

"But——"

"And make it snappy," he continued firmly, "in all senses of the word."

'But what shall I write about—the Palestine Report and Professor Coupland's prose style?"

"No."

"Then what?"

This one stumped him. "Er," he said, and after a pause, "er."

"Thanks very much," I said. "I could do you something pretty good along those lines."

"Funny, aren't you?" he rejoined. "Why not black your face, buy a banjo, and do the thing properly?"

"I shall write," I said, ignoring this, "about Australian Universities. One of those pungent articles, full of bitter, brittle wit, and saying how grim things are."

"It is like your crust," he said heatedly—for he is a Professor, "to suggest doing any such thing. Bitter, brittle wit, indeed! Who do you think you are—Bernard Shaw?"

"No," I replied. "The Last Trump to you."

"O.K.," he said. "After all, we've simply got to fill space. But tie a can to that wit of yours, and remember your place."

And so it was arranged. I must say, though, that now I am actually on the point of fulfilling the contract, thus lightly entered into, I feel pretty diffident about it. Come to think about it, almost everybody capable of uttering at all has uttered about Australian Universities in the past year or so. Remarkably pungent some of them have been, too—right out of my class. Still, I suppose it's only right for the jackal to begin snarling when the lions have stopped roaring; and I am told (I am mixing my metaphors a bit here, but you'll get the drift all right) that the gnat, by biting in the right place, can stir an elephant. And even though I can't hope to do that, there's no harm in poking about looking for a soft spot or two in the Australian University elephant. Anyway, here goes.

* * * *

Actually I am compelled to begin by saying, not how grim things are, but on the whole how remarkably good—especially when you remember that no University in Australia has yet had its ninetieth birthday. Recently I have been reading Professor Scott's *History of the University of Melbourne,* and it suddenly struck me that the site of the institution I had been more prone to curse than to praise was little more than a rubbish tip in 1850. The story of the Universities of Australia, in fact, has been one of rapid and inspiring progress. I am aware, of course, that progress tends to be rapid in the modern world, but I still think that there is something more than ordinarily remarkable about the development of a University which began its career, eighty years ago, with a couple of professors and half-a-dozen students, and which now provides a living for two hundred teachers and instruction for nearly four thousand students. Nor am I disposed to find overmuch fault with an institution which, in this space of time, has attracted men like Hearn and Tucker, Spencer, Masson and Lyle, Harrison Moore, Wood-Jones and Priestley—not to mention Leeper, Macfarland and Sugden, the great triumvirate who between them so firmly planted the collegiate idea, not merely in Melbourne, but in Australia as a whole. And Melbourne's experience is not unique. Each of the Australian Universities has a similar record of rapid expansion and a similar tale of famous names to tell.

It is nevertheless certain that the attitude of our University authorities is not one of complacency: rather, it is one of fierce discontent. For all the acceleration of the rate of progress since the war (Adelaide, for instance, has acquired six first-class buildings in that period), the cry is everywhere for more and better equipment, and each capital is witnessing an intensive campaign to get it. It seems to be generally agreed that departments are understaffed, that salaries are insufficient to attract the best type of teacher, that library space is inadequate to meet the demands of an ever-growing student body, and that many of the laboratories are hopelessly out of date. This is all part, I think, of a movement that is world-wide. During the past forty years the general conception of the requirements of a University has completely changed. Even Oxford, which most people a few years ago would have thought reasonably equipped, has recently decided that this is not so, and that if it is to do its work efficiently its funds and facilities must be substantially augmented. But whatever Oxford's needs may be, there can be no doubt that those of every Australian University are infinitely greater. Should anybody doubt it, he should see a book of photographs circulated a while ago by the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Oxford. These photographs, it appeared, were intended to have us all racing for our cheque-books, horrified that Oxford should have to put up with a library like the old Bodleian and laboratories such as those which now festoon South Parks Road. But they did not have that effect on me: they merely made me realise—for perhaps the hundredth time—the heart-breaking difference between Oxford and Melbourne. These were pictures of Oxford at its worst: they were strongly suggestive of Melbourne at its best. Melbourne is admittedly an architectural nightmare, and needs rebuilding on aesthetic grounds alone, so that it is possibly unfair to single it out as representative. But one must not be misled by Sydney's magnificent quadrangle, Perth's imaginative freshness, or Adelaide's Georgian harmony, into supposing that these Universities are substantially better off in the way of general facilities. They all have their needs: they are all striving to have them satisfied—some, apparently, with more success than others.

Nor can there be a great deal of doubt that the Australian Universities are, by modern standards, understaffed. The trend to-day is in the direction of specialisation by lecturers and professors in comparatively narrow fields, while increasing recognition is being given to the fact that students need more individual attention and guidance than they are liable to get as members of large lecture classes. The latter truth is the main contribution of Oxford and Cambridge to the university world in general, and there are few to-day who would deny it. But individual tutorial assistance is exactly what the universities of this country are least able to give to their students—and this because they lack the man-power. In Melbourne (and I should think it is much the same elsewhere) "tutorials" mean informal lectures to large classes, and merely add to the burden of an already over-worked staff without materially helping the student. The colleges do their best to repair the deficiency; but they, of course, cater for little more than a fraction of the total number of students, and in any event have their own worries in the way of understaffing.

More serious than the absence of any effective tutorial system, however, is the effect of overwork on the professors and lecturers themselves. They give, on the average, ten lectures a week throughout the year. In addition, every one of them is likely to mark anything up to 700 or 800 essays and exercises a year, and possibly as many examination papers. Many of them are also expected to do a great deal of administrative work, very often without clerical assistance. In these circumstances it is hardly surprising that most of them find research wholly impossible, or that many of them find it difficult to keep abreast of current progress in their particular subjects. There are such things, it is true, as sabbatical years, but it is dubious whether they do much to mitigate the evil. Teaching at the university standard is an exacting job even under the very best conditions: it not only demands a fresh mind, but also a mind whose stock of ideas is being constantly recharged by current reading. With the best will in the world, I find it difficult to resist the conclusion that such minds are at a premium in the universities of Australia.

For this reason alone, then, there is every justification for the appeals our universities are making for more funds. Nor can there be much reason for doubting that the various Governments should lend a sympathetic ear to these appeals, or that they should show their sympathy in an appropriately practical manner. A university performs a great social service—at least as great as that performed by a hospital or a gaol—and the day is past when essential social services should have to depend for their existence on private charity. It is no use suggesting that a modern university should be self-supporting: it simply can't be done. It has been discovered the whole world over that few individuals can afford to pay what it actually costs to educate them properly, and it would clearly be undesirable to limit the advantages of higher education to those who can. In any event, the people who attend them are not the only ones to profit from the existence of universities, for it has yet to be denied that doctors and engineers, scientists and teachers render a service to the community as a whole. It is the duty of Governments, of course, to be careful with the communal purse, and it is certainly not their duty to satisfy all the mendicants who throng the Treasury steps. But the universities which are clamouring for increased subsidies from the State are not beggars: they are rightfully demanding from society payment for services rendered. If society, through its accredited representatives, fails to meet the demand, it will stand to lose rather than to gain.

There is, however, another side to the picture. University authorities are perfectly entitled to agitate for more books and buildings, lecturers and research fellows, and to expect the community to defray the cost; but the community is equally entitled to ask whether this increased equipment, if granted, is likely to be put to its most effective use. Actually, of course, this is not the sort of question that the outside public will ask—it has too ready a faith in professors for that. But this should not prevent the professors from asking the question themselves. They might suggest, perhaps, that it will be time enough to discuss technical problems when the campaign for better equipment has been brought to a satisfactory conclusion, and that, until that time comes, discussion of educational policy would be fruitless. It seems to me, however, that when you are planning for the future you might as well do the job properly, and that in this era of plans and projects not the least important problem for consideration is that of teaching method.

Method, of course, is subordinate to purpose. The fundamental question, therefore, is: what should be the educational aim of a modern university? Before we attempt to answer this, it should be remarked that the peculiar feature of the present-day university is the ever-increasing part that is played in its curriculum by subjects of a technical nature. This does not make it a technical school—for I have it on the authority of the *Concise Oxford Dictionary* that a university is "an educational institution designed for instruction of students in all or many of the more important branches of learning"—but it does mean that its primary purpose is to provide the various "practical" professions with an adequate supply of competent recruits. In this it differs quite distinctly from the 19th century university, which was concerned almost exclusively with providing what was called a liberal education—i.e., instruction in the humaner sciences—and which had little to do with preparing people for the more technical professions. Fifty years ago the vast majority of undergraduates were destined for the Church, the Bar, the Civil Service or teaching, and their object for being at a university was to "broaden the mind." To-day the young men and women who go up to a university with this object in view are probably in a minority: most of them aim at graduating directly into a profession for which their university course is specifically designed to train them.

All this is clearly as it should be. Since the world needs doctors and dentists, scientists and engineers, it is up to the universities to train them, for it is better that they should do this than that they should leave it to technical schools. But it is important that in doing so they should not sink to the level of technical schools; for it is still the ultimate purpose of a university — even in the most utilitarian of its courses—not so much to impart practical information as *to train minds.* The man who enters the profession of engineering via the route of a university should take with him more than a stock of knowledge: he should take with him a mind firmly grounded in the principles of engineering science and capable of applying those principles intelligently, logically and constructively.

Now, the training of such a mind is not an easy matter. It is certainly not achieved by stuffing the student full of facts and giving him mental indigestion. Yet it is unfortunately true that this method, for one reason or another, has been increasingly resorted to. In Australia, at all events, there is a tendency to take the student over all the facts he might conceivably require to know in his professional career—to give him full measure, pressed down and flowing over, irrespective of whether he can carry it or not. Nor is the tendency confined to the specifically technical field: it is apparent to an equal degree in Arts and Law. Courses are overloaded with subjects, and individual subjects are inflated almost to bursting point. There is more mental indigestion per undergraduate than you would have believed possible.

This "give-'em-everything" system has grown up of its own accord—in the first instance, I think as the result of pressure by outside bodies, like the B.M.A., and later by force of example—but it has found a considerable amount of *ex post facto* justification. Thus one argument is that the university is defrauding the public if it launches people into their professional careers with gaps in their professional knowledge; while another (used more particularly with reference to Arts subjects) takes the line that as Australian schools send people to the university knowing next to nothing, it is up to the latter to repair the deficiency by taking them over as wide a range as possible. Arguments such as these carry weight in certain quarters, but they are nevertheless riddled through and through with fallacies. They assume, in the first place, that a student remembers all the facts placed before him in the course of his university career—than which nothing could be more untrue. They ignore, secondly, the unassailable fact that knowledge is useless without understanding, and that real understanding is the most difficult of all things to acquire. But worse still, they have their roots in the misconception that the student's mind is a mug into which information can be poured, instead of a piece of clay — shapeless and formless—which it is the university's function to try and mould into a useful vessel.

My own inability to understand this distrust of gap in the student's knowledge may arise, perhaps, from the fact that I teach history and economics, both of which subjects have their peculiarities. The scope of history, as everyone knows, is limitless, so much so that even a man like Acton, at the end of a life devoted to its study, had to admit that what he didn't know was a hundred times greater than what he knew. History teachers have accordingly always agreed that their teaching must be selective, and most of them are coming to agree to-day that the best method of selection is not to pick out periods here and there from the whole range of history, but to choose one compact period (e.g., the history of Europe since the Renaissance) and ask the student to do it thoroughly. The point is that during the years of a university course it is impossible to teach a man history: the best one can hope for is to teach him how to read history. This involves developing in him an ability to see the pattern in a complex of isolated events, to link effects with the appropriate causes, and to appreciate the exact significance and limitations of evidence; and it is being found that this can be done best by keeping him to a comparatively narrow field. The same principle holds good of economics, although for a somewhat different reason. The trouble with economics is that it is still in its infancy. Economists claim that they have made some progress towards truth, but most of them would confess that they are still groping. What the teacher of economics has to guard against, therefore, is allowing the student to suppose that there are any certain answers to even the most elementary problems of the subject. What he must aim at is teaching him to think, and to think logically, cogently and accurately. Once again, this is best achieved by limiting the ground which the student is expected to cover.

History and economics may be peculiar, but they are certainly not unique. It would surprise me if the scope of medicine or law, for instance, were any less wide than that of history, or if the problems of philosophy or political science were any less complicated than those of economics. I am convinced, therefore, that what is necessary in the Australian universities is an all-round unloading of subjects, with a view to making them more compact and easily handled. It is necessary in the Honours courses because Honours work demands detailed investigation and critical understanding, neither of which can be hurried: it is necessary in the Pass courses because the Pass student, who is *ex hypothesi* and in fact less capable than his more ambitious colleague, will not otherwise acquire more than a muddled collection of inaccurate facts. I do not suggest that the number or variety of subjects in each particular course should be reduced (although I understand that the new Professor of Engineering has found this necessary in Melbourne), but I do suggest that it is essential to limit the scope of individual subjects. Do so, and you can expect better work from student and lecturer alike—the former, because he will have time to digest the stuff he is absorbing; the latter because he will be able to plan a coherent and logical set of lectures, instead of having to dish out information in a wild race against time.

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And now for a word about lectures. It is curious that the lecture, evolved as a method of instruction in the days when books were manuscripts and rare at that, should have survived as the chief medium of teaching in an age in which books are plentiful and, all things considered, reasonably cheap. Ideally speaking, lectures should be unnecessary under modern conditions, and for the best students I think they are. It should be remembered, however, that the average student is not particularly good, and that the ear will often hear when the eye fails to understand. The lecture is not a substitute for reading, but it supplements it very usefully, and as far as Australia is concerned is indispensable. It is, nevertheless, possible for lectures to be overdone, and for them to encroach overmuch on the student's time. What the lecturer in his egotism is prone to forget is that the lecture-hour, often all too short for him, can seem like an age to the student, especially if the latter has already put in two or three of them that day. Most of us who lecture for a living get restive enough when the parson goes on for twenty minutes in church, yet we confidently expect students to spend three or four hours a day listening raptly to our own orations. There is a limit to the human capacity to listen intelligently, and I would not be surprised if it were reached, in the case of the average young man or woman, at the end of two hours. Nor is that the only point. Too many lectures not only minimise the value of the lectures themselves: they also interfere unduly with the student's reading. From my experience of college life I know that it is not practical politics to expect the undergraduate to devote, on the average, more than six or seven hours a day to the process of absorbing knowledge. He can exceed that allowance over a short period—e.g., in the Third Term; but if he exceeds it habitually, he can only do so at the expense of his recreations and with the risk of staleness and overstrain. Now, if he has to attend, say, three lectures a day, it follows that he will have not ordinarily more than three hours a day left for reading, and that is not enough. Actually in some faculties—in particular, science, medicine and engineering—the student has to attend three or four lectures every morning and to spend three hours each afternoon doing practical work of some kind in a laboratory: which means that he has to do his reading in the evening, when he is tired, or not at all.

It seems urgently necessary, then, that some attention should be paid to this problem. One suggestion which has been mooted in Melbourne, with a view at all events to mitigating the situation, is that wherever possible the lecture time-table should be arranged so as to leave an "academic recess" of three hours (say, from two to five in the afternoon) entirely free from lectures. This suggestion is scarcely applicable to the science departments, but could profitably be acted upon by the Faculties of Arts and Law. One of the difficulties commonly met with by the student at the moment is that he has to attend lectures at times scattered over the whole day, with the result that his reading is interrupted and discontinuous; and if this could be avoided he would undoubtedly gain. A further suggestion—not to be regarded in any way as an alternative to the first—is that the first and second terms of the academic year could be shortened from ten to eight weeks, and the two short vacations correspondingly lengthened. At present the Australian undergraduate is not accustomed to regard vacations, short or long, as times in which to work, and it may prove impossible to teach him to do so. But to lengthen the short vacations would, I think, be a step in the right direction, especially if precautions were taken to prevent them from being treated completely as holidays (by setting vacation essays, for example, or holding viva voce tests at the commencement of the second and third terms). I am told, however, that this suggestion, like the first, is simply not practicable in the case of the technical departments, whose lecturers find it difficult enough even under the existing arrangements to cover the ground.

But is it necessary, in lectures, to "cover the ground"? According to the existing tradition, apparently, yes: but is the existing tradition a good one? All I can say is that my own instinct is all against it. As I see it, university lecturing must proceed on the assumption that the student can read, and that if he can't he isn't worth bothering about. Once this assumption is made, then it should be clear that it is the purpose of lectures not to provide what the student can get out of text books, but to give him something quite different. Inspiration, illumination, provocation—this is the sort of thing the undergraduate should get from the lecturer, not a pedestrian presentation of facts he can find out for himself in text books. But the lecturer who consciously sets out to deal exhaustively with the syllabus at once strikes the pedestrian note and seldom gets away from it. If there is a pattern in his treatment, it is soon buried and lost under a mass of detail: if he pauses to develop a particular theme, he does so with the uneasy knowledge that he has about forty other themes to deal with that term: if he ever succeeds in inspiring his students, he is lucky.

Lecturing should be a fine art, and a course of lectures should be like a well-painted picture—impressionistic, imaginative and compact, strictly cohering to a central design. Like the painter, the lecturer should seek to emphasise what is important, to eliminate unnecessary detail, and to get inside the skin of what he is portraying. If he succeeds, then he has undoubtedly produced a work of art: more than that, he has given his students what they want, and in a form in which they can most easily remember it. I am convinced that he is most likely to succeed, moreover, if the number of lectures he has to give in any particular course is strictly limited. Just as twenty square yards of virgin canvas tempts the painter (Rubens, for instance) to run riot, so the knowledge that he has forty-eight hours to fill in inevitably encourages the lecturer to pad and bolster, and to give lectures which, taken as a whole, have little unity of form or purpose. But cut down those hours by a half—reduce the canvas—and you will put him on his mettle: The need for economy will force him not only to eliminate what is unnecessary and to stick to what is essential, but also to give his full attention to the central pattern.

In a more visionary moment, in fact, I would be inclined to suggest that the number of lectures given in a subject during the course of a year be limited to twenty-four, arranged in three groups of eight, each delivered, wherever possible, by a different lecturer and each dealing with a different aspect of the work. Such a suggestion may seem fantastic—it is certainly revolutionary—but it has much to commend it. It would emphasise the fact that it is the function of lectures to inspire rather than to instruct: it would enable the lecturer to specialise, and thus to produce first-rate instead of second-hand work: and it would allow him more time for effective tutorial activities. From the student's point of view the change of lecturers at the end of each term would be a substantial gain, and would prevent the boredom which almost always arises when he has to listen to the same man twice a week throughout the year. Above all, it would maximise the amount of time available for reading or, in the science courses, laboratory work. The library, the laboratory, the lecturer's study—these are the places where the student makes his most valuable discoveries, and the more time he can spend in them the better. So even if my scheme is rejected as being too drastic, the adoption of a modified version of it is essential.

It might be objected that a reduction in the number of lectures, though ideally desirable, will remain impossible while the quality of the average student continues to be as low as it is at present. This I emphatically deny. My own experience is that the bad student is the last person to take anything away from the lecture-room, and that the paucity of his work in examinations is due—if to anything but his own dullness—not to the fact that he has not been lectured at enough, but to the fact that he has not read enough. At present, what the average student tries to do in the examination-hall is to remember what the lecturer said about this or that, and, as a rule, he is not more than partially successful. This sort of thing is universally condemned, but nothing is done to remove the fundamental cause of it—which is the unduly large role played by lectures in the university system. If an undergraduate spends half his working time at lectures, of course he is going to place too much reliance on them, partly from necessity and partly for psychological reasons.

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Those who have persevered with me up to this point will have had no difficulty in realising that I have been making a not very subtle plea for the adoption by Australian universities of the educational technique used in Oxford. I am not ashamed of it, although I wish I could have made it more cogently and convincingly. I know that Oxford is a very peculiar university, but I also know that there is method in its madness—and method which is the product of ten times the experience that any Australian university can boast. And even if we want to avoid the madness, we could easily do with some of the method.

RELIGION IN EDUCATION

By J. H. REYNOLDS.

A MEDIAEVAL critic might have said of the modern educational system— " . . . you seem to have the most curious ideas about what the end of it all is. You seem to leave God out. Perhaps this is in part because you talk so much of knowledge for its own sake." (Christian Life in the Middle Ages, by F. M. Powicke, Oxford.) In Australia we do not quite leave God out, but we are perhaps a little apprehensive about the possible effect of His activities in the realm of education. Despite the fact that many of our teachers are Christians, we could hardly say that our education ideal was avowedly Christian in character, even if we accept J. S. Haldane's broad definition of Christianity. "The very basis of religion is the fact that this universe is a spiritual universe; that God is in us all and everywhere around us, and is not a far-away shadowy being. This is the essence of the Gospel which Jesus proclaimed. . . . It is not a gospel of rest and ease, but calls us to action in whatever position we may be; for it is only in action that we can realise our oneness with our fellow-men and with Nature, and in so doing realise our oneness with God." (The Australian Journal of Psychology and Philosophy, December, 1924.)

Have we then a moral standard in Australian education? This question is meant to be just as practical as that of the Oxford undergraduate who, having listened patiently through fifty lectures, to a proof of the existence of a moral standard in general, stood up at the end of the course and innocently asked his torturer, "What is the use of a moral standard?" Assuming for the moment that a moral standard is useful, what are the qualities of that good life which we encourage our pupils to lead? One must ask this definite question, because the phrase "the good life" is so often used as if it consisted in a course of moral exercises patented by Plato, and still obtainable from all leading philosophers. No doubt Plato himself would be the first to admit that his patent rights have long since expired.

Although Australian educationists and teachers frequently speak of "the correct conduct," "the basis of moral and religious living," and of man "directing his life by the values he finds," they do not so often proceed to detail the principles underlying such correct conduct. Many schoolmasters, of course, feel that morals and religion are caught rather than taught, and some University teachers might insist that students should search for and discover their own values. Where infection is possible, and search encouraged, one can appreciate these points of view, but are Australian children actually being bitten by a moral "bug," or Australian undergraduates being encouraged to create moral values?" There is undoubtedly a moral background to Australian education, but it is too much in the background. Most of us, if pressed, would agree that there is a moral standard, and many that this standard should conform with Christian ethics, but few go further than this, we seem to make little attempt to face the question of a moral standard in education. Australian education has not perhaps been in a position to work out its own moral standard, but deriving as it does from the British educational tradition, it has naturally placed considerable emphasis upon the right development of individual character, and has accordingly been compelled to adopt a moral standard. Might one suggest that the main element in this standard has been an insistence upon virtue as a kind of social cement, the good life in action. "The great purpose is to enlist the boys or girls in the service of man to-day and man to-morrow." But Sanderson of Oundle, who spoke these words in his last address, believed that the sanction or driving force behind "this life of love and service" was in part at least a religious sanction. He spoke at another time of "the Divine builder, of Him who came to restore a kingdom, by Whose life and death a new world was created." If we, in Australia, cannot claim a religious sanction for our moral standard, we can perhaps claim that social virtue is its own sanction, that men are naturally imbued with an active love of humanity. Alternatively it might be urged that these virtues have a utilitarian sanction or the negative sanction of experience. Whichever may be the case one feels that these social virtues in Australia may be in danger of degenerating either into the virtues of the employee or into a vague spirit of good fellowship, a kind of spiritual bonhomie—which allows all Australians to regard themselves as jolly good fellows, and to forget that although all Australians assuredly are good fellows they may not all be jolly. It is because I doubt the strength of the sanctions behind the social morality which is the most important aim of Australian education, that I would propose the substitution or addition of a Christian sanction.

In the Christian ethic the fundamental moral law is supremely social, namely, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," and it is informed, and made alive, by constant reference to the mind of the Founder. (Christian Faith and Life, by William Temple, S.C.M., pp. 47 and 53.) Although a Christian standard is not explicit in Australian education, it is often present in the personal standard of the teachers, and this is the first practical step that might be taken. Those teachers who are Christian by profession, should be scrupulous in their efforts to be Christian in practice. Might one also suggest that voluntary courses on the Bible should be given by experts at Teachers' Training Colleges. Recently I heard two experts, one English and one Scottish, talk on the training of teachers for more than an hour without mentioning the words religion or moral standard!

In primary education one must commend the churches for the work they have done in their own schools, while recognising that State education must remain secular. But the best use should be made of the provision in all the Australian States for religious instruction to be given by visiting teachers. Personal experience, of a highly salutary nature, has convinced me that this is a splendid opportunity for experts! In some of the Australian States invaluable work is already being done in this way, but I do not think that the full importance or proper scope of this work has been sufficiently realised.

A well-known Australian educationist who recently made a survey of one of the State educational systems, in speaking of secondary education in the State concerned, said that the teaching in the best State secondary schools was of a better quality than the teaching in the Church secondary schools. But in his opinion the State schools were handicapped in their educational function by the lack of a religious standard. One feels that much better use might be made, at the secondary stage, of the provision by which religious instruction may be given by visiting teachers. In one of the Australian States, for example, an educationist tells me that excellent religious instruction is being given at the primary stage, but the work done at the secondary stage is very indifferent.

In talking this subject over with the University teachers, one of them said: "Is there any religion in education?" Admittedly the Australian Universities do not provide many opportunities for the study of religion, but surely we might copy the example of great Universities like London, and make religion a subject of study. When Nelson put his blind eye to the telescope, it may be presumed that he did not wish to see anything, but can a seeker after truth adopt such an imperfect point of view? If it were thought inexpedient to make theology a degree subject, I would suggest that voluntary courses in theology and comparative religion should be given. Another University teacher suggested that such courses would be a "flop," and that to talk about religion makes people feel uncomfortable. But the Australian University student is by no means uninterested in religion, and would not good courses of this kind be of the greatest help to him in his journey through the destructive phase, the preparatory step to the creation of values? The Universities must recognise their responsibility to help in the creative, as well as the destructive, side of the journey. Here, of course, the residential colleges are in an excellent position to play a part. As for making people feel uncomfortable, it is true that unwillingness to speak about spiritual matters may have "its root partly in real reverence," but is this always so? Is not our discomfort sometimes due to an unwillingness to realise that "it is because people are like us that the world is what it is."

It is true that the day school system naturally throws the main burden of religious education on the home, but one cannot feel that Australian education in general has been sufficiently concerned with ends, as opposed to the training of teachers and the provision of equipment. Is it because there is a certain unwillingness in the Australian character to press matters to conclusions? In any case, we must feel ourselves impelled to think out this question and to decide what the moral sanction behind Australian education shall be.

AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH EDUCATION AND EXTENSION

By ALLAN R. CALLAGHAN.

THE present century is witnessing an agricultural revolution, the outcome of the application of science; the exhilaration of success in this field has led us blindly forward, with research as our slogan, but the economic crisis has emphasised the urgent need for reorientation of our endeavours, and a halt must be called lest over-specialisation in one field swallow the results of over-specialisation in another. The world, largely by reason of agricultural research has increased production beyond the absorptive capacity of our economic system, while at the same time research is providing the same world with artificial substitutes which threaten the very structure of primary production. In the face of this it is staggering to realise that there exist enormous latent possibilities between present production and production on a plane of higher efficiency. Bridge the gap that exists, in almost every country of the world, between the sound scientific knowledge available and that applied, and the potential increase in productivity might well exceed by 50 per cent. the present level.

Economic autarchy has dominated Europe and with it the agricultural research of the past has been disseminated through the channels of highly organised, if highly expensive, education and and extension services. Germany and Italy particularly have demonstrated in recent years that if scientific principles of production are forced upon the rural population, even though it is per medium of a dictatorial extention service, the results may prove phenomenal. The case of Italy, where a settled policy under Signor Mussolini has had time to fructify, is at once informative and arresting, and by way of illustration, the wheat position therein, compared with ours in Australia, provides a homely and very striking contrast, even though forgiveness may be asked for using examples not strictly comparable.

In 1924, prior to the beginning of the so-called "grain battle," Italy harvested 170,144,000 bushels of wheat; nine years wheat campaign resulted in 1933 in "wheat victory," for in that year the harvest of 305,000,000 bushels was sufficient to cover the national requirements. This enormous increase has been attained, not through the advantages of good seasons, nor by increased acreage, but by sheer human effort, in other words, by increased human efficiency. For the five year period before the war, 1911-15, Italy's average wheat yield was 15.6 bushels per acre; for the period 1921-5, immediately preceding the "grain battle," the average yield per acre was 18.8 bushels; by 1933 this yield per acre, which, after all, is the only broad measure of efficiency available, was increased to the phenomenal level of 24.32 bushels, while the average for the four years 1931 to 1934 inclusive, was almost 22 bushels (21.94) per acre. The object of the campaign was self-sufficiency in wheat; that this has been largely achieved is obvious from the fact that if the imports of wheat in the five years 1909-13 be taken as equal to 100, the imports rose to 238.1 in 1922-3, and fell to 0.9 in 1933-4.

The objects behind the campaign are not the concern of this article, but the manner of achievement offers a splendid example of the possibilities of systematic and well-directed extension of technical knowledge and application. It is an example in which no effort has been spared to convince the rural producer in Italy that by growing only high producing varieties—the products of research and its application in the sphere of agricultural genetics—by using artificial fertilisers—the reflex of scientific investigation by agricultural chemists—and by adopting the best principles of culture—the work and experience of trained agronomists—increased returns per acre follow as a natural corollary, which in turn are reflected in the welfare and stability of the people. The fact that the average yield per acre was increased from 18.8 to 21.9 bushels in the space of ten years is a remarkable illustration of what can be done when present scientific knowledge is well disseminated and universally applied.

Europe in its struggle towards agricultural self-sufficiency has had to devote particular attention, such as that exemplified by Italy, to the farmer. Exporting countries, on the other hand, have been faced with policies of restriction, and in these countries, without exception, intensive research in agricultural science has continued, but the education of the rural worker has been slow.

Adhering to the example of wheat production, by way of contrast with that in Italy, and it is found that for the same period in Australia progress has been slow under the more democratic policy of *laissez-fairė*. For the five years, 1911-15, the average yield of wheat in Australia was 10.04 bushels per acre, for the period 1921-5 it was 12.17 bushels per acre, and for the years 1931-4 it averaged 12.26 bushels per acre. While a 50 per cent. increase in yield may not be possible on the present area devoted to wheat in Australia, there seems to be no reason why a 25 per cent. increase could not be achieved in, say, ten years, if through a well-directed campaign farmers were persuaded to benefit and take advantage of already available proved scientific knowledge.

The agricultural world, as it is organised and controlled to-day, is a striking contradiction of terms. In agricultural economics there is chaos, in education and extension services there is efficiency on one hand, inattention and inactivity on the other; the only constant is that of technical agricultural research work which is being pursued with fervour throughout the world. Even in the latter there is a discordant note in that the broad objects of research are in conflict, for while national self-sufficiency and isolation dominates the activity of research in an endeavour to find home-made substitutes to take the place of imported primary commodities in some countries, in others, of which Australia is one, every line of agricultural research aims to increase primary production.

Broadly speaking, in the present world of closed national economies there is obviously less scope than ever before for international division of labour. The age in which countries enjoyed the advantages of a natural monopoly of certain commodities is fast waning—fortunately the Australian wool industry remains a very exceptional case in this regard—the industrial nations of the world, through the impulse of self-defence, have deserted the countries which were formerly the purveyors of foodstuffs and raw materials. These latter countries, and Australia has been no exception in this respect, have been forced, through economic circumstances, many of them artificial, it is true, to encourage industrialisation and thereby create a larger internal market for locally produced agricultural commodities, thus making the primary producer less dependent upon exports and sponsoring increased employment as well as greater stability and balance in the country as an economic unit. This development, which is recognised in Australia by the policy fostering secondary industries, has an important bearing upon scientific research work in this country; obviously at least a division of research effort and expense on the part of the Governments between secondary and primary industries is warranted; in fact, at the present juncture, an intensive, well-conducted campaign of research to help the secondary industries is likely to be more helpful to the primary producer, indirectly by increasing employment, and creating reliable home markets through stimulus given to industrial undertakings, than if the same efforts were concentrated upon agricultural research.

There is a considerable lag between scientific discovery in agriculture and application, simply because supervening between the two is the necessity for agricultural education and dissemination per medium of extension services to the multitude of farmers who constitute separate, and to a large extent distinct, units of production. This lag does not exist between the industrial research worker and the manufacturer of secondary goods; in this case almost immediate application is possible.

Of all agricultural endeavour in Australia, education, and especially the extension services, have benefited least of all from the attention liberally devoted to the agricultural welfare of the community. Research work in agriculture, and by research, I refer more particularly to the fundamental scientific investigation which is the very basis of lasting progress, has undoubtedly dominated the vista of the agricultural intelligentsia of Australia. Education and extension services have, unfortunately, had to be content to bask in the reflected glory of their more dignified brother.

The error is not confined to agricultural research, for in all scientific enterprise the research atmosphere has dominated education. Up to a point this is very desirable, but research officers are fundamentally specialists. What is more, they are usually enthusiasts—otherwise they would not be successful in research—and, by reason of this very enthusiasm and undivided interest, they are not always keen educationists. University students these days come before a group of intensely trained specialists; each specialist is undoubtedly eager and keen to impart the recondite knowledge of his subjet to the oft times uninitiated, and consequently half receptive, mind of quite intelligent students. University instruction grows up in the atmosphere of research, and, of necessity it would seem, in compartments too separate and confined. The student often fails at the outset to grasp the very elementary but exceedingly important fundamental principles, or rather fails to obtain the correct perspective upon which to receive the higher flights of scientific knowledge imparted by his several tutors. Then again, the scientific research officer may not, and in many cases is not, temperamentally suited to instructional work. To such a man instruction of students becomes an irksome, uninspiring duty, that takes him away for hours at a time from the more absorbing problem awaiting his attention in the laboratory. Further, because of the higher scientific background which engages his mind from day to day, scientific thought becomes easier, even though the work upon which he is engaged becomes more complicated. Soon the simpler underlying principles which activate his investigations and control his thought become so obvious to him that they are never fully and adequately stressed in explanations to students, who, after all, are merely laymen when they come forward for education. The whole system tends, therefore, to train research officers, especially from the more highly intelligent students. There are many, however, who wish to engage in more general fields of work, but largely through lack of inspiration they embark upon their work, only to spend some years after graduation shedding the cloak of investigational science, and acquiring the correct atmosphere, perspective and proper general understanding of their profession. Application, with its manifold practical implications, brings the young graduate into contact with an entirely different realm to that under which he has been trained. Adjustment is generally rapid, but it is during this period of adjustment that the young man is apt to lose considerable prestige, especially with the practical worker, who, in most cases, to begin with is intolerant of university graduates.

Educationists should by all means engage in some investigational work, but it should be made subsidiary and subservient to the main function of educating students. Research work should, and must, go on, but ability in research should not be regarded as the *sine qua non* for teaching. University students—never to be taken too seriously it is admitted—should not feel the urge to hold meetings of protest against the uninspiring tedious machinations of dictated instruction; they have a claim and just right to look for more eloquent treatment of the subjects they study.

If scientific progress continues at the rate it has progressed in the last thirty years, the future University student of science will be faced with an impossible task, unless greater efforts are made by educationists to co-ordinate the various branches of science, so that the force of application is more readily recognisable. At the moment there is an ever increasing tendency to neglect this co-ordination of the various avenues of abstract science.

Failure on the part of the student to orientate correctly the multitude of elaborate scientific facts with which he has perforce plagued his mental digestion, almost to his despair and stupefaction, means delay, and often much disappointment, when he has to face the world and put his learning into practice.

Apply this principle of education to agriculture and veterinary science and failure to meet the man on the land on a fully informative and helpful basis is the likely result; there is an urgent need for graduates in the extension services of agriculture and veterinary science.

At the present time the several agricultural colleges of the Commonwealth form the main training grounds for extension officers, but this is chiefly because the universities have largely failed to do so. In the main it is infinitely more difficult for the practical man to become scientific than it is for the scientifically trained man to become practical provided the latter has the inclination and aptitude to become practical. The best training at present available for extension workers is a full three years' course at an agricultural college, followed by the university training in either agriculture or veterinary science. Generally, the more brilliant graduates of the agricultural colleges do this, but, alas, the university atmosphere ushers them into the realm of research and they are lost to the extension services where they more correctly belong. Another influence persuading such men to follow research is engendered by lack of confidence in university men on the part of those controlling the extension services. While this emanates largely from prejudice nurtured from the fact that university graduates in Agriculture and Veterinary Science are comparatively modern products, a big proportion of the prejudice may justly be laid at the door of the university training, where animal husbandry is taught without animals, and plant husbandry without a farm. In this regard insufficient use is made of existing facilities at the agricultural colleges by the universities, and if extension officers of first-class calibre are to be trained, the preliminary course at an agricultural college is unquestionably a very necessary adjunct to the university degree. Extension officers of the future should be graduates of both the agricultural colleges and the universities; failing this, the university courses in Agriculture and Veterinary Science should be run in association with a farm. The least expensive solution obviously lies in closer liaison between the agricultural colleges and the universities. The present fug of research must, to a large extent, be dissipated by more refreshing drafts of less specialised educational atmosphere.

If increased production is economically sound, then concerted efforts behind a determined policy of dissemination of approved knowledge in agriculture together with voluntary, or enacted co-operation, whereby the best husbandry would be practised and only the best livestock used, would have miraculous results. There is a tremendous amount of misguided effort on the land, simply due to lack of knowledge on the part of the average, and especially the below average, farmer.

Any programme of real expansion will need practical men with technical training to put into universal practice the findings of science. Men are required from the universities educated in science and able to read and increase their knowledge with intelligence and interest, but above all, ready to take up educational work in the field, where they will, not only be required to remain scientific in outlook and advance with the times, but they will also be required to meet the farmer, the man whom all agricultural research, education and extension aims to help, on a basis of clearer understanding and helpful co-operation.

There is an oft quoted dictum that "Agriculture is the oldest art and the youngest science." Care must be exercised lest the science which has been so helpful estranges itself from the art, which is our most cherished heritage.

OUR GREAT EMPTY SPACES

By C. T. MADIGAN.

THE challenge of the totalitarian States has compelled the attention of all nations to their own areas and populations and natural resources, and to the still empty or only partially occupied spaces yet remaining on the globe, on which the so-called "have nots" are turning covetous eyes. We have not heard as much criticism as might have been expected of Australia's seven million people in its three million square miles, possibly owing to our remoteness from the world's trouble centres, which, in that case, is not altogether without its advantages. We have not been called upon in so many words to defend the results of our hundred years or so of occupation of this continent, but it is well for us to examine them for ourselves, to know our own country well enough to be able to meet possible criticism at the present and to plan for the future, as the demand for a more equable distribution of the world's population becomes more insistent.

The myth of our great untapped natural resources has now almost vanished, but the real nature of our empty spaces is still very little known to most Australians, and naturally very much less to the distant outside world. The subject was discussed by the writer in his Presidential Address to the Geographical Section of the A.N.Z.A.A.S. in Auckland in January, and it is proposed to summarise the conclusions in this article.

Of Australia's 2,974,600 square miles, 1,041,400 square miles, or 35 per cent., is absolutely unoccupied and empty. Let us see just where this unoccupied country is and what it is like. It is nearly all in Western Australia, South Australia, and the Northern Territory, and it is made up of the sand-ridge deserts and their margins. These sand-ridge deserts are areas of parallel sand-ridges, their direction that of the prevailing winds. The ridges run unbroken for a hundred miles and more in places; they are strictly parallel, and average about 50 feet high and a quarter of a mile apart. The sand-ridge deserts are in three main parts, the Simpson Desert in the south-east corner of the Northern Territory, encroaching on Queensland and South Australia, and covering 115,000 square miles; the Great Victorian Desert in south-eastern Western Australia, extending into South Australia, of 135,000 square miles; and the Great Sandy Desert in the northern part of Western Australia with an easterly extension into Central Australia, and an area of 235,000 square miles. These sand-ridge deserts have a rainfall of under 10 inches, except for the northern half of the Great Sandy Desert, where it rises to 20 inches. The sand is fixed by vegetation, which is in general more plentiful than in most deserts of the world, but surface water is entirely absent, and rainfall either so low, being under five inches in parts, or so markedly seasonal in the northern tropical regions, as to make agriculture entirely impossible and grazing so sparse and unreliable as to be worthless. One sixth of the continent is covered with these useless sand-ridge deserts, whose limits have been carefully mapped.

The unoccupied country marginal to these sand-ridges, an area as big again, although devoid of sand-ridges, suffers under all the other disabilities of climate, rainfall and lack of permanent waters, and is of equally little value. Almost the whole of the unoccupied areas of Australia is comprised of the sand-ridge deserts and their neighbourhood.

To glance at the unoccupied areas State by State: in Western Australia, with its total of 975,900 square miles, 544,500 square miles, or 55.8 per cent., is unoccupied. Of this, 367,400 square miles, or 37.6 per cent., is, in the writer's opinion, worthless. It is outside the limits of present pastoral occupation and includes the deserts and their margins, the eastern half of the State. The remaining unoccupied country is surrounded by pastoral or other leases, and can be regarded as occupiable to the extent that the neighbouring country is occupied, to be discussed later.

About half of the Northern Territory's half million square miles is occupied, or 55.4 per cent. to be exact. A considerable portion of the remainder might be occupied, as underground water is found, but at best only on the present extremely attenuated scale. The unoccupied country in the Northern Territory includes barren Arnhem Land, the Simpson Desert, and the eastern end of Western Australia's Great Sandy Desert, to the south-west.

South Australia has 162,200 square miles of its total 380,100 square miles unoccupied, or 42.7 per cent. This is comprised of the western half of the State, which is the eastern end of the Great Victoria Desert, and the south end of the Simpson Desert.

Ninety per cent. of the unoccupied land in Australia is in these three States—Western Australia, South Australia and the Northern Territory, a total of 940,100 square miles, nearly one-third of the continent.

Next in order comes Queensland, with 73,300 square miles unoccupied, or 10.9 per cent. It is stated in the Queensland Land Administration Board's Annual Report for 1936 that there are no vacant spaces clamouring for occupation in that State. All land of any economic value whatever has been taken up by Crown tenants or is under private ownership, or has been reserved for timber or other public purposes. Most of the unoccupied land is open for pastoral lease or occupation license, but is generally of such inferior quality that no terms that the Administration can offer will induce anyone to hold it, not even for relief purposes. It is regarded as waste country, and is not worth even a rent of 2/6 per square mile. It is not often that we read such a straightforward statement as this. Exactly the same applies to all the unoccupied land in South Australia, and most of that in the Northern Territory and Western Australia. Anyone can have it and break their hearts over it at a peppercorn rental. The standards in South Australia are lower than those in Queensland. There much land is let for the absurd sum of 6d. per square mile, but these leases are frequently abandoned and rents remain uncollected.

Only 7,300 square miles of New South Wales, 2.3 per cent., is unoccupied—a negligible area. Victoria has some desert country in its mallee in the north-western district, but there is only a total of 8,500 unoccupied square miles in that State, or 9.7 per cent. Similar country across the border in South Australia is all occupied. Half of Tasmania, 12,200 square miles, is very rugged forest country, unoccupied, but the military jest that that delightful little island is only attached to the Commonwealth for rations is unjustified.

This million square miles of our country that is unoccupied must for all practical purposes be regarded as worthless. It has been tried and abandoned and tried again. No more can be done with it than has been found possible in the deserts of the Old World, throughout historic time. The population of Egypt will remain on the Nile Delta just as that of Australia will remain in the eastern States and the southern and south-western coastal regions. The arid regions are really suitable only for a nomad grazing population. This is the system evolved in the Old World deserts, and even adopted in a modified way in Australia by the large pastoral companies, who can move their flocks from station to station. Continuous stocking in low rainfall areas means extremely meagre stocking, so meagre that the country must be considered valueless from a national standpoint.

The sheep country in the Flinders Ranges of South Australia, long settled, and with waters fully developed, carries at best 35 sheep to the square mile. Other vast areas in South Australia carry from 15 to 25 sheep to the square mile.

Good country carries two sheep to the acre, or 1,280 to the square mile, such country as the Australian agricultural country. This comparison is very important to note. The good country, the settled country, is not just a little better than the arid country; it is fifty times better. This is the melancholy but absolute fact.

The country north of Oodnadatta in South Australia carries only one bullock to the square mile, and that figure is not exceeded in many cases in the Northern Territory. It requires 500 square miles of such country to support a family, though be it noted that many stations of five thousand square miles are at present unable to pay their way. A family to the 500 square miles gives a population density of one person to the hundred square miles. If the whole of our unoccupied area of a million square miles, which no one can be induced to take up, were settled on this basis, it would give us another paltry 10,000 inhabitants. If four others are supported by every man on the land, it only means 50,000. If the value of the land is grossly underestimated, as the ignorant optimist might maintain, still a few hundred thousand people would fill it, supposing the produce could all be disposed of. In short, our great empty spaces are practically no asset at all, and we are wasting good time and energy in giving them any further attention, when there is so much to be done in the parts of the country that will respond.

There is something rather heroic, something still of the pioneer spirit, in the reluctance to abandon the empty spaces. It is not as if they had not been given a trial, but the stories of failure are forgotten. The history of the Northern Territory may be quoted as showing Australia's determination to develop her resources to the utmost, her valiant efforts to win more from the land than nature is willing to concede. For twenty years South Australia poured money into the Territory. The overland telegraph of 2,000 miles alone cost half a million; 800 miles of railway were built; experiments in every kind of agriculture, tropical and otherwise, were made; mining was encouraged, and slow pastoral penetration was made the chief policy. In 1911 the Commonwealth relieved South Australia of its burden, and by 1927 another 460 miles of railway had been built, cattle and mining had been further exploited, and the administration had been greatly increased—in fact, beyond the needs of the country. The world depression ended this great effort. To-day there is a revival in interest, a new administration, a boom in gold mining, a fresh commission to review the old story, and some talk of completing the railway. And yet the country is no further forward. Agriculture is represented by a thousand acres of peanuts, mining by a low grade goldfield, and only the cattle enable occupation to continue. There are about 135 cattle stations on the 290,000 occupied square miles, so that the average area of a station is 2,000 square miles, not the 500 square miles used above as a basis of population estimation. The expenditure on the Northern Territory for the year 1934-1935 was £783,000, the revenue £199,000, and the deficit £584,000.

The same story of struggle against adversity could be told of all the States in their efforts to develop their arid areas, and particularly of South Australia. Too much attention has been paid to the inhospitable country, too little to the occupied country. The two million square miles of occupied country can be broadly divided into two classes—that suitable for grazing only, and that suitable for agriculture and closer settlement. The pastoral country represents 1,689,800 square miles, and the closer settlement country 436,300 square miles, by the writer's estimates.

The country useful for pastoral purposes only, 56 per cent. of our total area, varies from the marginal desert country of doubtful value, to good sheep and cattle country as in central and eastern Queensland. About three-quarters of Australia's sheep are in the country here reckoned as agricultural and closer settlement country, and half of them are in New South Wales.

The fact must be faced up to that 85 per cent. of Australia is country of low value and capable of supporting but a small population. One is called a pessimist for bringing this point clearly forward, but it is pessimism in one direction only. Optimism about the empty spaces is misdirected. There is plenty of room for it in the remaining 15 per cent. of Australia.

The closer settlement country is made up of 11.4 per cent. of the area of Western Australia; 16.3 per cent. of South Australia; 10.8 per cent. of Queensland, 34.7 per cent. of New South Wales, and 90.3 per cent of Victoria, a total of 436,300 square miles.

This country, with all the amenities of soil and climate, is not one quarter developed. The untapped resources are here, at our back doors, not in the unknown interior. Irrigation can be extended, tropical agriculture can be carried much further in Queensland, and wheat growing increased in Queensland, New South Wales and Western Australia. There is the possibility of enormous increase in our secondary industries, which must come as the population grows. The steel and other metal industries are only in their infancy. The brown coal is an immense asset that will some day come into its own.

Neglecting altogether our empty spaces and our sparse pastoral country, which must always remain practically empty, the remainder of our continent is still a vast area which can give far more abundantly than it has yet been called upon to do. We have in this half million square miles an area twice that of France, and it must inevitably in due course carry at least as many people as France's forty million.

Australia has perhaps something to fear from foreign conquest on account of her present happy spaciousness, and the claims for room for expansion put forward by the military dictatorship countries, but those claims, however dangerous, are quite fallacious and mere excuses for national or personal aggrandisement by conquest. Acquiring new territory never has and never will relieve the pressure of population in a country. It is now realised that population becomes static when saturation is reached. The small gaps left by migration are immediately filled. Wholesale migration is unknown and impossible. The only mass movements since the dark ages have been those of small political or religious sects. The German people did not migrate to their colonies, the Japanese have not swarmed into Korea, the Italians show no desire to go to Abyssinia. It has been said that the chief advantage of colonies is for the more lucrative investment of the surplus capital of the few! There is no pressing need for Australia to increase her population by millions in the next few years, and in any case, such a thing is utterly impossible. It could not take place even in the unthinkable event of foreign invasion. Australia will continue to advance at an ever-increasing rate, but the advance will not be into the great empty spaces.

AUSTRALIAN POPULATION PROBLEMS

By J. A. La Nauze.

THE flamboyant utterances of politicians in recent years upon the population question are signs that somewhere far back beyond the trumpets and the shouting there is a problem. As usual the first results put forth by investigators, with due caution and hesitancy, are presented by the popularisers as firmly established dogma, and conclusions are cheerfully drawn from them to be made the basis of emotional appeals. This article merely records some important aspects of Australia's population problem. It appears in these pages because the population question is of such wide significance that the attention of readers who may not be acquainted with economic and statistical publications should be drawn to it.

The problem may be briefly stated. It is common with varying degrees of urgency to Australia and most other countries with European populations. For a considerable time past the birth rate has been falling. Its downward trend has at some periods been interrupted, but the general tendency to fall has been continuous. The crude birth rate (number of births per 1,000 of population) is a deceptive figure; but fertility (average number of children per mother) has been falling, too. Fertility is now such that if it continues at its present level the population of, say, 1937, will not ultimately be replaced. There will be increase for a time, but if mothers of to-day are not bearing enough girl babies to replace them, allowing for wastage, and if this diminished number of potential mothers in their turn do not replace themselves, future decline is inevitable (omitting for the moment consideration of immigration). This is the present situation. In Australia we are not at the moment very far below replacement level; in England and a number of other countries the deficit is very considerable. The situation has been summarised by Kuczynski in the statement that at present levels of fertility many countries of European stock are "doomed to die out." To advance this as a prophecy would be to draw unjustifiable conclusions about the future; for social habits and scientific discoveries are unpredictable. But as a matter of arithmetic and on the assumption of a continuance of fertility indefinitely at its present level the statement is quite correct. The reasons cannot be given in full here, but it can be stated that a decrease in mortality (deaths) cannot significantly affect the situation. Immigration may add to Australia's total population, but unless the fertility of immigrants is very appreciably higher than that of native-born Australians (which does not seem to have been the case in the past) ultimate decline would be postponed, but not prevented.

A slackening in the rate of growth of populations may for many reasons be desirable; but it is not generally realised that if there is a failure to come up to replacement level it will be very hard to reverse the tendency. It may be argued that biological failure of the white races is not necessarily regrettable, especially in view of the sort of world they seem to be preparing for themselves. But it is unlikely that such a cynical view would find general acceptance and it is inevitable that the population problem of the next few generations will assume the form of an effort to induce mothers to have more children. It is necessary that the matter be carefully investigated and that the extent of the problem be calmly envisaged. Hysteria will not help matters.

The social and economic effects which are likely to result from a continuance of present population trends have often been described. Where the annual addition to the population declines, the average age of the community grows and an increasing proportion of its numbers are found in the upper age-groups. The effects of this tendency which has prevailed for a long time past are already visible in the growing total of old-age pensions, and perhaps in the greater residuum of "normal" unemployment even in good times, compared with that of the nineteenth century. Economic effects are likely to be many and various, and numerous problems of adjustment can be envisaged. Economic expansion and progress since the Industrial Revolution have assumed and, in fact, been associated with, growing populations. Where populations cease to grow the economic structure will have to undergo considerable changes which are likely to be much more difficult than those associated with expanding markets. One has only to remind oneself of the overwhelming importance of Great Britain as a market for Australian produce to realise that the decline of the British population which is expected within a few years may have repercussions of considerable importance.

There is much argument over the reasons for the decline in fertility (cf. Wolstenholme, *Australian Quarterly*, June, 1937). In spite of some weighty opinion to the contrary, the widespread use of contraceptives would seem to be largely responsible. But this is only a means for realising a desire for family limitation. The opinion of Carr-Saunders and Himes that woman among all races and cultures have always desired to limit births, but that only recently they have had the means is supported by a good deal of evidence. In the numerous discussions of this question, not enough weight has been given to the effect of the woman's volition in the matter of family limitation. The time taken up by successive confinements and years of attendance upon young children in a society where the great majority of family incomes are insufficient to provide house-maids or nurse-maids has no doubt been increasingly felt as a burden when women have acquired a great variety of interests outside the home. Women are not unwilling to have any children, but think that more than, say, two, impose burdens. Yet an average of two children per mother will not maintain a population. The other important motive would seem to be economic, and this, no doubt, affects both parents. The belief is held that class standards of comfort would have to be reduced if children were numerous. This clash between self-interest and community interest in the continuance of the race may be the Achilles heel of capitalism.

It is held by some that there is a reluctance to bring children into the present world, haunted as it is by the prospect of war. This motive may be of some importance in Europe and among sensitive and educated people elsewhere. But fertility fell in the United States in the prosperous years before 1929, when such fears had little, if any, weight, and it is doubtful, where this reason is expressed, whether it is more than a rationalisation of the motives, irksomeness or financial burden.

Though public attention has now been attracted to the population question, it is not generally realised how low fertility has fallen and how difficult it may be to arrest the decline. If one may judge by preliminary trumpetings political action (which is fairly certain to be taken before many years) may easily take the form of hasty measures and appeals to emotion which are not likely to be effective. Some points which need investigation and attention may be suggested. The assumption is made that peaceful conditions continue. If this prove to be unwarranted, all discussion about population increase will be otiose.

Investigation must be made into the real motives for family limitation. While the statistical position is now very clear there is no certainty concerning the reasons for it. If, as one suspects, it is found that among the leading motives are the revolt of women against the burdens involved in child-bearing and child-rearing, and the fear of inability to maintain class-standards of comfort, this may give a clue to the ways in which a policy may be applied. Mr. Wolstenholme has suggested (loc cit.) "the development of social services for young children and mothers, such as improved day nursery arrangements." This idea may have to be carried a good deal further, so that mothers with no domestic help can have considerably more time and freedom than in the past to lead their own lives. The removal of the financial burden of children will involve much more than a maternity bonus or a slight concession on income tax. It must be remembered that this motive, for family limitation, is far from being entirely selfish. Under our existing social arrangements parents are naturally and rightly anxious to place their children in at least the same income class as themselves, if not a higher one. Families of more than a small number involve expenses which make impossible the saving necessary to support children through extended years of education which parents may desire to give them. Thus, not only is it a matter of much greater financial help (either in the form of direct grants or free services) than has hitherto been envisaged, but of providing an assurance that extra children will neither be handicapped themselves nor handicap those already born.

It is to be emphasised that nothing could be more foolish than the policy which has been suggested of prohibiting the manufacture and sale of contraceptives, even assuming that the fall in fertility can be definitely associated with their use. It is doubtful whether such a measure could be enforced and substitute methods would tend to be used. But more important, the mere enactment of such a measure would arouse a spirit of resentment and hostility, whereas above all the problem is one of creating a willingness to have children. When this willingness is created, contraception will still have an important part to play in assuring that births are spaced with due consideration for the health of the mother, and that children born are welcome to their parents.

At its present rate of replacement, the Australian population would begin to decline in less than two generations. The population of Great Britain is almost certain to begin to decline within ten years. The movement of fertility which is responsible for such a situation may be very hard to check or reverse. One assumes that it is desirable that our population should at the least not fall below its present numbers, but rather increase somewhat considerably (say, twice) beyond them. If a positive decline is to be averted, parents must have the will to have somewhat larger families than they do now, say an average of between three and four children per family, instead of between two and three. This result will not be achieved by the granting of maternity bonuses, measures against contraceptives, appeals to patriotism, nor even mere improvement in medical services in connection with childbirth. For the causes of the modern habit of the small family lie deeply embedded in our social structure and surface scratching will not reach them.

REASONABLE PROTECTION

By W. A. Merrylees

IT seems to be universally accepted that the sole end to be aimed at in devising a fiscal policy is promotion of the welfare of one's own country. The Australian people have long accepted the view that their welfare is best promoted by a protectionist policy. The purpose of this article is not to question either of these assumptions, but, accepting them, to inquire into the conditions under which any particular industry should be afforded protection.

In pursuing this inquiry we must first make sure that we do not allow ourselves to be influenced by the popular prejudice that we should export as much as we can, and import as little as possible and preferably nothing. We have only to remember that we are not benefited simply by having a thing, but only by using it in the appropriate manner, to see that it is not our exports but our imports that directly benefit us. For it is these that we use. Our exports are used by their importer and benefit him.

If then, as in fairyland, we could by wishing either increase our exports and decrease our imports, or, if we preferred, increase our imports and decrease our exports, the way to benefit ourselves would be to export as little as we could, and import as much as possible. In this world, however, material goods have to be paid for, and the only way of paying for imports is by means of exports. What we should in fact do, therefore, is to export as much as we can that is not required for home consumption, as payment for imports we can consume. This will lead to the maximum supply of goods being available for home consumption, and, if our economic system is adequate to distributing these goods, will enable all to enjoy the highest possible standard of living.

In pursuing this inquiry it is also important to bear in mind that our exports not only pay for our imports, but also in reality pay the duties we levy on these. Where a man produces goods which he does not require for his own use, he may be able to sell them in the home market, receiving in return money with which he can buy other things which he does want. If, however, the home market is fully supplied, he must export them and sell them in a foreign market which is not fully supplied. In return he will receive foreign money. This, however, is not current in his own country. To use it (unless he is prepared to go and live in that foreign country until he spends it) he must, at any rate in effect* buy in that market goods which he either requires himself or for which there is a demand in his home market. These he imports and (either uses, or) sells, and in return receives payment in home currency. The money thus received represents payment for the goods he exported, made in a form in which he can use it to buy locally other things he requires. If, then, he has to pay duty on the goods he imports, he will have to deduct for this purpose part of the money he receives for them, and so will really receive so much less for his exports.† Consequently, the duty on his imports is in effect a charge on his exports. The exports not only pay for the imports, but also pay the duties on them. The position is exactly as if the same amount had been collected as an export duty on the goods he exported. The same is true of all imports and all import duties. Our exports as a whole both pay for all our imports, and pay all duties we levy on them, each paying these in proportion to its value. The various import duties, therefore, represent in effect a uniform *ad valorem* duty on our exports.

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*In practice the transaction will probably be much more complicated. It will be handled by a number of different people and may involve transactions in many different countries. In principle, however, this makes no difference.

Bearing these points in mind, how are we to determine what industries should be protected, and to what extent? The problem can be divided into two parts. (1) What industries require protection, and in what degree, in order to become established and thrive? (2) What industries would the government be justified in protecting, and to what extent, on the ground that by doing so they would in the balance be conferring some benefit on the community? For convenience, I propose to say that a duty is *required* if without it an industry would not be established, or would not thrive, locally; and that a duty is *justified* if its imposition would in the balance confer some benefit on the community. Using the terms in this sense, a duty might well be required, and yet not justified. That is to say, though without the duty the industry would not be established or would not thrive, yet its imposition would in the balance be detrimental to the community instead of beneficial. On the other hand, the possibility of a duty being justified and yet not required is so remote that the fact that a duty is not required may well be taken as sufficient evidence that it is not justified. Consequently, any industry seeking protection, or the continuance of protection, should first be called upon to show that protection is required. If it establishes this, it is then necessary to consider the much more difficult question of whether the protection it requires is also justified. If, on the other hand, it fails to establish this, then its application may well be dismissed without further consideration.

To decide what protection, if any, is required by an industry, we must ascertain or estimate: (1) What it would cost an efficient industry to produce the article locally in the numbers required by the home market, or by that portion of the home market which could be captured ($=a$); (2) The amount by which the price of the locally produced article must be reduced below that of the imported article in order that the local product should capture the market, or the above mentioned portion of it ($=b$); (3) The price at which the article in question would sell if imported duty-free, and without competition from the local product $(=c)$; (4) The amount by which the price (apart from duty) of the imported article is likely to be reduced in order to compete with the home product $(=d)$.

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†Thus suppose a man breeds half a dozen surplus horses, which he sends to India and sells there for rupees, with which he buys four hundred dozen corn-sacks, which he imports and sells here for £130. In effect, he has received £130 for his horses. If, however, he had had to pay a duty of one shilling a dozen on the sacks, his net return for his horses would have been £20 less.

The home product will then sell at a, and the price of the imported article must not fall below $a+b$. The price at which, apart from duty, the imported article is expected to sell under competition is $c-d$. Consequently the duty required is: $(a+b)-(c-d)$. For example, if a (the cost of producing the article profitably locally) $=5$, b (the necessary margin in favour of the local product) $=1$, c (the duty-free and competition-free price of the imported article) $=4$, d (the amount by which the price of the imported article is likely to be cut under competition $=1$, then the duty required equals

$$\begin{aligned}&(a+b)-(c-d)\\&=(5+1)-(4-1)\\&=3.\end{aligned}$$

To determine whether the required duty is justified, we have first to ascertain whether it is in itself economically justified. It is, if the total added cost to the community of the article under protection is more than offset by the total additional income derived from its production (and importation) under protection. To determine the added cost we have to ascertain or estimate: (1) The cost to the community of the article under protection $(=l)$. In our previous illustration this would be equal to the number of locally produced articles sold (say, 1,000) multiplied by five, plus the number of imported articles sold (say 100) multiplied by six, i.e., $(1{,}000\times5)+(100\times6)=5{,}600$. (2) The cost to the community of the same number of articles if imported duty-free $(=m)$. In our illustration it would be $1{,}100\times4=4{,}400$. The direct added cost would be represented by $l-m$; in our illustration, 1,200. To this, however, must be added any loss suffered by the community as a result of any diminution in the consumption of the article as a result of the imposition of the duty $(=k)$. For instance, those who would have purchased the article had the duty not raised the price may be involved in loss; if the article is a machine, through continuing to use a less efficient machine. For purposes of our illustration, let us assume that $k=500$. Taking into account this loss, the total added cost $(=x)$ is $l-m+k$. In our illustration $x=5{,}600-4{,}400+500=1{,}700$.

To determine the community's additional income from the industry under protection we have to ascertain or estimate: (1) The earnings of capital and labour in this industry under protection, and of those portions of other local industries which supply its raw material and plant $(=n)$. Let us set this down for purposes of our illustration as 4,000. (2) The earnings of the same capital and labour, wherever employed, if this industry were not protected $(=p)$. Assume this is 3,000. (3) The amount of duty collected on the articles still imported under protection $(=q)$. In our illustration this, according to the figures already given, would be 300. (4) The portion of all import duties paid by this industry's exports, if any

($=s$). Put this down as 10. The community's additional income from the industry under protection ($=y$) will be $n-m+q+s$; i.e., $y=4{,}000-3{,}000+300+10=1{,}310$.

The direct economic gain to the community will be $y-x$. If this is a positive quantity, the required duty is in itself economically justified; if, on the other hand, it is a negative quantity, the duty is not in itself economically justified. In our illustration $y-x=1{,}310-1{,}700=-390$. Hence this duty in itself would not be economically justified; it would involve the community in a loss of 390.

A duty which is in itself economically justified should be imposed, and a duty which is not thus economically justified should not be imposed, unless there are other good and sufficient reasons for doing otherwise.

There are grounds which might justify a government in imposing or maintaining a duty which was not in itself economically justified. It might do so on wider economic grounds. It might, for instance, impose a duty on imports from certain countries of an article which could not be produced locally, in order to favour imports from other countries willing similarly to favour its exports. Thus Australia might impose a duty on typewriters from foreign countries only, if Britain would grant a similar preference to Australian soap. A government might also be justified in imposing or maintaining an uneconomic duty as a means of compensating a section of the community that gains no benefit from its economically justified protection for the burden which this protection imposes on it. Any locality engaged solely in industries which it is uneconomic to protect will find that the economically justified protection afforded to industries carried on in other parts of the country, though it is beneficial to the country as a whole, nevertheless imposes a considerable burden on the people of that locality. To compensate them, the government might be justified in affording uneconomic protection to one of their industries. This, I take it, is the ground on which a Queensland sugar grower should seek to justify the protection given to his industry, if this protection is not economically justified. It might, however, be better or more economical to provide this compensation in other ways, for instance by a direct grant. Again, a government might be justified in imposing or maintaining a duty which was not economically justified, in order to guard against interruption in the supply of an essential commodity by war or by industrial disputes abroad, or in order to preserve an industry which would be vital in the event of war. Thus Australia might be justified in providing uneconomic protection for a locally produced substitute for petrol, so that her motor and air transport could not be paralysed by her petrol supplies being cut off by a foreign power or by foreign industrial upheavals. (This contingency, however, might be equally effectively and perhaps more economically guarded against by always maintaining a considerable supply of petrol.) Or Britain might be justified in imposing an uneconomic duty on oil in order to preserve its coal industry, because of the vital importance of this industry in the event of war interrupting the supply of oil. A government might be justified, too, in imposing or maintaining an uneconomic duty in order to provide work for a group of people whom it is socially or nationally important to keep employed in their present occupation or locality. Thus Britain might be justified in providing uneconomic protection for the fishing industry because of the vital importance of having trained seamen available in the event of war; or Australia in protecting any industry which could be carried on in unoccupied areas of the Commonwealth which it is nationally important to populate.

There are also grounds which might justify a government in removing or refraining from imposing a duty which was economically justified. It might do so for wider economic considerations; for instance, in order to avoid evoking retaliation against its own export trade to countries whose exports would be affected by the duty. Or it might do so in the interests of peace, or in order to promote or preserve good relations with the countries whose exports would be affected by the duty. Of it might do so on altruistic or sentimental grounds, in order to benefit or not to injure another country in whose welfare it was unselfishly interested.

Protection is justified, in the interests of a particular community, only if in the balance it confers some benefit on that community. Such protection, however, will not be advantageous to all members of the community; all engaged in unprotected industries will be adversely affected, unless we take other measures to compensate them. In some cases compensation may not be necessary; in others it will. Compensation can take various forms according to the circumstances; a bonus, a grant, the provision of utilities or services free or below cost, etc. Special measures are required, where an unjustified duty is abolished, to compensate those who will as a consequence be thrown out of work. They should be paid while they are taught to acquire skill in another industry which can use their services in a manner not burdensome, but advantageous to the community. There can never be any lack of such industries. For even if no industry producing goods which could be exported, or producing goods which could be imported, would be economically justified in employing them, there will never by any lack of services which can be rendered only within the country by its own inhabitants, e.g., improving roads, houses, gardens, parks, etc. All available labour can always be utilised in some way that will be advantageous to the community. There is no need to maintain, by unjustified protection, an industry which costs the community more than it earns for it, merely in order to avoid unemployment. All can find employment in industries which are beneficial to the community, provided our economic system is (or is made) adequate to distributing to the community the goods which the community can produce, or get in exchange for the goods it produces. There is no justification for imposing or maintaining unjustified protection as a means of overcoming unemployment which is really due to defective economic organisation.

THE PRESS TO-DAY

By L. C. WILCHER.

NOT so long ago, for my sins, I went to hear another man lecture. His subject was journalism, his theme the iniquity of the academic attitude towards the Press. He began his address by saying some hard things about the modern newspaper, and wound it up by saying even harder things about the University man's outlook upon it. He admitted that modern journalism had its failings, pleaded that these were mostly inherent in the whole structure of the Press, and asserted that in any event they weren't half as bad as the academic profession appeared to think. It wasn't, he said, that he minded criticism; what he objected to was ill-informed, unsympathetic and entirely destructive criticism—especially from people who ought to know better. Where he had come across such criticism he did not specify—beyond indicating that it was common in Universities; that he had come across it was obvious. Very bitter he was, full of quips about "irresponsible squibs" and "deliberate misrepresentation," and contemptuous of Professors and all their works.

All this should have harrowed me not a little. In my time I have shot off an irresponsible squib or two at newspapers, and doubtless there have been times when, under the influence of strong emotion, I have strafed them unfairly. But I am afraid that my consciousness of this did not unduly disturb me: after all, I have been equally critical of Prime Ministers and music-hall artists, traffic policemen and the Marx brothers, and it seemed to me that in any case the papers could well take care of themselves. My curiosity, however, was aroused. What was this academic attitude the man was beefing about? What *did* my colleagues think about the Press? Did they think sufficiently alike to warrant this chatter about a common academic attitude? Off-hand, I could not answer these questions, but I thought it would be fun to pursue them further. This I have done, and the article I am now writing is the result of my inquiry.

Actually, it is no easy thing to discover what the academic world thinks about anything: there is so much thought and so little agreement. Suggest to one professor that another thinks so-and-so, and as likely as not he will spend the next half-hour proving, in chapter and verse, that so-and-so is the reverse of the truth. At the end of it all you will be no nearer to knowing what he really thinks than you were before. Perhaps that is why undergraduates complain of the hopelessness of looking to their teachers for the solution of complicated problems. I am not in a position, therefore, to decide even now whether there is a common academic attitude to the Press or not. I have, however, discovered one thing: i.e., that members of my profession, when they become vocal about newspapers, are more disposed to blame them than to praise them. Too much importance should not be attached to this, for a gift for ready enthusiasm seldom characterises the pedagogic temperament: nor does it mean that when all is said and done they are really hostile to the Press. It does mean, however, that the result of my inquiry can best be stated in the form of a list of dislikes—a list, that is, of the features of Australian journalism which meet with the disapproval of the people whom I have consulted. They are:—

1. Leading articles of all kinds.
2. Comic strips and serial cartoons.
3. Headlines out of all proportion to the significance of the news contained in the letterpress below them.
4. Articles exploiting undergraduate excesses or making capital out of petty University scandals.
5. The practice of featuring sporting events—e.g., the Melbourne Cup or Test cricket matches — to the extent of three or four pages daily.
6. Inadequate cable reports of international events.
7. Uninspired treatment of Australian political news.
8. Press campaigns designed to foment popular prejudices or fears—e.g., the recent infantile paralysis campaign in Victoria.
9. Journalese.

I have excluded from this list purely individual grumbles, such as that of a socialist friend who condemns the whole Australian Press (with the exception of *The Daily Worker*) as "capitalist-minded," and that of a conservative who refuses to buy an evening paper on principle and has given up reading *The Argus* since it took to printing news on the front page, as being too peculiarly personal to merit further comment.

At first sight it is difficult to perceive any guiding principle in this list. Careful consideration, however, has brought me to the conclusion that there is, and that behind all these apparently unconnected dislikes lies a fundamental conviction, natural in those who instruct for a living, that it is the primary duty of the Press to educate its readers. Thus the pedantically-inclined person who despises journalists as class because, in the hurry and bustle of their trade, they use a jargon instead of English, does so because he thinks that a newspaper ought to teach its readers how to write English. Equally, the man who dislikes glaring headlines and the undue featuring of sport is at bottom moved by a belief that a newspaper should aim at imbuing its readers with a sense of proportion, while his distrust of inadequate cable reports arises from a fear that they tend to present a distorted and incomplete picture of the international scene. Comic strips offend the scholar inasmuch as he feels, in an obscure way, they they lower the tone of public taste instead of raising it, while infantile paralysis campaigns and the like annoy him because he feels that they pander to popular prejudices and terrors and do nothing to create a sane and healthly outlook on things. As for the dislike of leading articles—well, what scholar ever trusted cocksureness and deliberate bias?

If there is a coherent academic attitude towards the Press, then, it is that the Press is essentially an educational institution, endowed with the responsibility of aiding and abetting professors in their fell design to raise the country's intellectual, moral and cultural standards. This view is perfectly natural, and there is a lot to be said for it. The formation of a man's mind does not stop at the age of fourteen or eighteen or whenever it is that he leaves school: it goes on as long as he lives. In it all sorts of things play a part, the pulpit, the trade union, the radio, the club—anything, in fact, which serves as a medium through which ideas are put into his head. And of these the newspaper is the most important, not merely because more people read newspapers than belong to clubs or trade unions, or go to church, but because they are more continuously under the influence of newspapers than the other institutions referred to. Most people read at least one paper a day, a great many never read anything else. Some of them, of course, listen to the wireless, but the wireless, although probably the greatest source of popular entertainment to-day, has hardly challenged the newspaper's supremacy as a source of popular ideas. The time is past, admittedly, when a newspaper could create opinion by direct methods as it did in the days of Horace Greeley, in America, and our own David Syme. The editorial, for all my colleagues' distrust of it, is a waning force, as was decisively illustrated by the overwhelming rejection, in the face of the editorial policy of every leading Australian daily, of the Government's proposals in the recent Referendum. This and other instances show that the average reader of newspapers to-day prefers to form his own opinions without editorial assistance: but the fact remains, whether he realises it or not, that the things he has opinions about depend pretty largely on what he reads in the papers, while the opinions themselves are determined by the way in which the papers present the news of the day to him. It is from the Press that he gets the facts, or alleged facts, which are the raw material for most of his thinking, and his thoughts are shaped accordingly.

On general grounds, therefore, this academic attitude towards journalism appears to be eminently sound: in the cause of human progress it is vitally necessary that the Press should display a nice discrimination both as to the kind of news it presents and as to the way in which it is presented. The enormous power which the Press possesses should, ideally speaking, be wielded with the highest possible sense of social responsibility. But the fact remains that we do not live in an ideal world, and that under existing circumstances few pressmen can follow their trade wholly—or even primarily—in this spirit. For better or for worse, the modern newspaper is a commercial undertaking, and its policy is governed by the same spirit as that which animates any private business enterprise. It needs capital—needs it in ever-increasing quantities as journalistic standards rise—and it must produce dividends for those who provide it. It can only do this if it can attract advertisers in a big way, and this is possible only if it attracts a large number of readers. This is does by the process known as "giving the public what it wants"—i.e., by using every known device which will have the effect of encouraging people to buy. And it is a melancholy fact that most people do not deliberately buy newspapers for the purpose of mental and moral uplift: they buy them because they hope to be amused or entertained or excited. No paper to-day—even *The Times*—can ignore this fact: the worst of them never think of anything else.

In Australia the principle of giving "the public what it wants" does not mean pandering to the lowest and most vulgar instincts of man. It might if the Press were more highly specialised, but fortunately the whole structure of our Press makes this impossible. In countries like England and the United States, with their large populations, each paper tends to cater for a different stratum of society. Thus in England the intellectual élite has *The Times,* the collar-and-tie crowd *The Daily Telegraph,* the small shopkeeper *The Daily Express,* the trade unionist *The Daily Herald* . . . and so on. This means that the British citizen has a wide choice between newspapers of every shade of opinion and every degree of quality. The good are very, very good and the bad are definitely rotten. In Australia, however, such specialisation is impossible, and so is the variety. No newspaper in this country, if it is to be a commercial proposition, can afford to be either very good or very bad, for in neither case would it attract enough readers. It must aim at serving a mixed *clientèle,* and its menu must be generously *à la carte.* It must contain fare for Richmond and Toorak alike, and it must not stint either. "Something for Every Man" might well be its motto.

It is a noble motto, from some points of view, and it is nobly lived up to. I know of no English newspaper, certainly, which presents its readers with such an astonishing amount and range of news as does *The Argus* and I know of no paper anywhere which strives so persistently to maintain the dual role of public guardian and popular entertainer. But there is a danger that he who tries to please everybody ends up by pleasing nobody, and it is a danger which *The Argus,* in common with the other Australian morning dailies, has not wholly avoided. Therein, I think, lies the secret of academic criticism of the local Press: the University man buys *The Argus,* say, because it gives him something of what he wants, but dislikes it because it also gives him a great deal that he doesn't want. His feeling towards it is like that of the curate towards the famous egg: he can't help noticing the bad part more than the good.

I am, however, merely explaining his attitude, not supporting it. For there is another hoary saying, equally applicable here, that it is better to have some bread than no bread at all, which I will translate, if you like, into "Better an egg which is at least partly good than one which is wholly bad." Actually, I feel that most of my academic friends are unduly cantankerous and unnecessarily blind in this matter of the Australian Press, and that they would be better employed thanking their lucky stars that *The Argus* and *The Age* are better than *The Daily Express* and *The Daily Mail* than in complaining because they aren't as good as *The Times*. Nor do I feel for a moment that the character of the Australian Press can be radically transformed: I am too much of an economic determinist for that. To use yet another of those exceedingly wise old saws, he who pays the piper calls the tune. In the present context the piper is paid by the advertiser, and the tune he wants is that which will draw the crowds. That is the fundamental fact, and no criticism of the newspapers which does not pay due regard to it can ever be truly constructive. At the same time, it seems fair to say that the constructive critic should also take into account the other fact that the newspapers *ought*, wherever possible, to follow the educational line.

This brings me to a question which has long intrigued me, to wit—is the tune played by our journalists necessarily the only one to which Australian readers, as a class, will listen? I am diffident about asking this question, and for the very good reason that it is always an impertinence for the layman to suggest, even by implication, that the professional does not know his job. As I see it, the schoolmaster has every excuse for annoyance when a stock-broker tries to tell him how to teach the young, and I see no reason why the pressman should be any more pleased to receive gratuitous advice from a University lecturer. But in every profession what has been tends to obscure what might be, and often the outsider, through his very ignorance of the traditions of the craft, may blunder on possibilities which the craftsman has overlooked. And it does seem to me just possible that the practising journalist slightly underestimates the intellectual calibre and taste of the average Australian reader. I do not suggest for a moment that the Press is the least bit mistaken either as to the sort of things he wants to read about or as to the extent to which he wants to hear about them; but I do suggest that it takes an unnecessarily low view as to the *form* in which he likes them presented.

I can best illustrate my meaning by reference to sporting journalism. There can be no question that the great majority of Australian readers want sporting news in their papers, as much as they can get: nor could it be suggested that the papers could, or should, ignore their plain desire. From one point of view, moreover, the quality of sporting journalism in this country is particularly high: nothing could exceed its competence at getting and presenting people with the required information. Its literary quality, however, is on the average decidedly poor—presumably because it is assumed that the public does not want and would not appreciate literary graces in its sporting matter. Yet no sporting journalist has ever met with such widespread appreciation in Australia as did Mr. Neville Cardus on the occasion of the last Test series, and no sporting journalist, with the possible exception of the famous Mr. Bernard Darwin, was ever more consciously "literary." So obvious was his success that some of the local men were temporarily fired to imitate his manner—sometimes with amusing results—but with his departure for the Manchester bleakness he talked so much about came a return to the old dull routine. Why? Why wasn't the experiment persevered with and elaborated upon? I suppose articles by first-class writers cost more than articles written (or signed) by native athletic heroes; I am sure that first-class writers are not to be picked off every blackberry bush; but I have yet to be convinced that the Australian sporting public wouldn't respond to them. If another reason for this view is necessary, let me point to Mr. Ivor Warne-Smith, easily the best stylist among Melbourne's sporting writers, whose bi-weekly articles on football in *The Argus* cut more ice with the ordinary football-goer than any others I know of. There was a time, as a matter of fact, when Mr. Warne-Smith was one of my two chief reasons for preferring *The Argus* to *The Age*. The other was a writer who signed himself "Preview," and who wrote a weekly article reviewing the latest films in the best C. A. Lejeune manner. "Preview" was possibly not everybody's poison, but he certainly went down well with most people of my acquaintance, and I know many who put a black mark against the day of his disappearance. Maybe these are few compared with those who like to get their information about films from box-office blurbs, but I simply can't believe it myself. I still think "Preview" or somebody like him would find a host of willing readers, and it is inconceivable that he would stop people from buying the paper. Nor would comic strips which really were comic. Of course, there is a market for comic strips—I form part of it: but the market would be larger if they made us laugh more heartily and often.

Or take foreign news. Everybody is interested in the international situation to-day, so much so that the Press's policy of featuring it in a big way on the front page is patently sound, both commercially and educationally. Conversation with any newspaper-reader would make it evident, too, that the sort of foreign news we get to-day interests everybody. I would nevertheless make bold to say that it leaves much to be desired. I say this, it is true, partly because I distrust its continual bias against the Dictatorships—a bias which is common to the democratic press the world over and which is doing not a little to prepare the ground for the next world war. It is remarkable how many people, confirmed pacifists until a year or so ago, are now ready to confess that they would not mind firing machine guns at fascists or nazis. But quite apart from this I would criticise the Press's handling of foreign news on purely technical grounds. I am aware that the collection of accurate information about international affairs, always difficult, has been rendered increasingly so by the rigorous censorship of news as practised in all the fascist countries, but I sympathise with those who feel, with *The Bulletin,* that much of the news we do get is unnecessarily muddled and confusing, and that at times it is an insult to one's intelligence. To be told one day, as we were last week, that the Japanese have won a complete victory on the northern front and to learn on the next that the Chinese have surrounded a whole army corps on the same front tests, to say the least of it, one's powers of belief. The papers might say that such is the news at their disposal and it is up to the reader to exercise his own judgment as to its accuracy, but I can't accept that for a moment. Where there is such a wide discrepancy between different reports, surely a little discreet editing of the news is possible? Or if the ethics of the trade forbids this, surely care could be taken to tone down the headlines appended to reports about whose veracity there could be any obvious doubt? This raises the whole ticklish question of headlines, and I realise that a Press which uses a headline stretching across half a page to draw attention to the prospects of a horse in a minor race cannot be too sparing of headlines in the case of foreign news. The headline has come to stay, but it is nevertheless an instrument which should be used cautiously, at all events as far as content is concerned. The real solution of the foreign news difficulty, however, appears to lie in the commentary. At present most of our papers publish daily commentaries on the foreign cables. These are a useful corrective to the reports, but are usually separated from them, tend to be too scrappy, and are put together too hurriedly to allow maturity of judgment. In their stead I would prefer (1) short editorial notes appended at the foot of the cable reports, and (2) bi-weekly articles on the international scene as a whole, written by well-known men, and published in a prominent part of the paper —not in the week-end magazine section, but on the centre page after the style of *The Times* turn-over article. I am convinced that the great mass of readers would welcome articles of this kind, especially if efforts were made to feature them. It would take time, perhaps, to build up the reputations of their authors, just as it took time to build up those of Mr. Cardus and Mr. Walter Lippmann. But it would be worth the effort.

It is my view, in effect, that the educational and commercial aspects of journalism are not necessarily incompatible. Giving the public what it wants indubitably means serving it news about the sort of thing it is interested in, but it does not mean that the Press must permanently resign itself to presenting that news in a cheap and shoddy form. When fashion decrees it, the hatter must sell pork-pie hats: but the mere fact that the public wants this possibly regrettable form of headgear does not imply that it would be bad business for the hatter to make the best pork-pie hats he can at the popular price. I have no prejudice against the pork-pie hats of journalism—i.e., against what is called "bright" journalism. Far from it. Bright journalism sells newspapers, and if newspapers are to have any widespread influence, educational or otherwise, they must sell. Further, I would say that even when the newspapers consciously set out to "improve" their readers' minds, they should use bright methods. Nobody wants dull articles, however good they might be in other ways, but nobody would regret clever, provocatively worded and heavily featured articles because they also happen to to be well-written and instructive. Actually, the trouble with most of our papers is that they have made a dichotomy between what is popular and what is good. They print masses of really good stuff, but discourage the less discerning of their readers from paying any attention to it by failing to stress it as they stress the less good things which they imagine to have a wider appeal. The dichotomy is largely of their own making: they could abolish it if they would.

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