

Rev. Brother Le Breton on Men in High Places

In this contribution by Rev. Brother Le Breton he criticises the slipshod use of the King's English by men in exalted places. "We boast of our culture in Adelaide," he says. "It is good to boast of a thing so excellent. But let us first be sure that we have it."

Scholars of note who have recently returned to Australia from Europe and America have expressed dissatisfaction at the manner in which Australians "speak the speech" of the English language. It is well that attention has been called to the matter; it would have been better if those who spoke had taken more care of their own phraseology.

These babbling diminutives into a deep well—into the "well of English undefiled," if you will—but at any cost let them go out of common speech.

Two of the most prominent statesmen in London used the words "We won't stand any monkeying."

In the name of the King's English, let us cry for reform, and let us seek it from those in the seats of government and the university chairs, by way of good and compelling example.

The use of the word "lot" is a trap for the unthinking as dangerous even as "got." There is not a "lot to be done," as a leading Adelaide man said recently. There is not a "lot of unemployment," as a certain clergyman stated in the same sad week. An auctioneer may divide articles for sale into lots and an estate agent may sell land in lots. Otherwise the word is best left alone.

LOOSE EXPRESSION

Added to these discouraging slips of the tongues of people in high places is the loose expression of thought which also does violence to "the King, his English."

One learned lecturer said that art is a passion.

Art is certainly not a passion. Love is a passion. Hatred is a passion. One might have a passion for art, but art itself cannot be, from the nature of things, one of the passions.

A bishop was guilty during the past month of using the word "humans." Men are not humans. Human is an adjective, and when bishops lower their mitres to bow to such use of speech they do a grievous wrong to the body of the King's English.

Let our professional men, at least when they make public utterance, join in a crusade against a loose use of the King's English. It is a worthy cause and the language deserves to be saved.

Our South Australian children would respond as readily as young New Zealand does to the good example of careful speech set by parents and continued and confirmed by teachers and public speakers.

"GOT" AND "LOT"

One learned lecturer said that American film producers should be made to realise that there was a "big" British public to be catered for besides the Americans. When I read that my soul cried out.

I deny that there is a "big" British public anywhere; but if I am wrong I cheerfully take up the cudgels on behalf of whatever "little" British public exists somewhere else according to the implication of the pronouncement by the professor.

From the heart and centre of English things—London—have recently come some shouted phrases of frenzied people for which we cannot be grateful.

Mr. Stanley Baldwin (former Prime Minister) said, "We have got to govern or bust."

We have not "got" to govern, for the simple reason that to govern is not a thing, and it cannot be "got."

Nearer home we have the phrase "get lost" bandied about from a certain public enquiry and flaunted in the newspapers.

It is not possible to "get lost." There could be no chance for anyone to have "got lost" at any time. There is no possibility of "getting lost" in the future. Lost cannot be got; it is non-existent.

Mr. Baldwin's alternative is even more objectionable—to "bust." When might a person rightly be said to have busted?

Preceding this inelegant outburst was an equally unlovely one from a titled woman who called an unappreciative audience "Bolshies."

For the sake of pure speech let us drop

COLLOQUIALISMS IN SPEECH

"Sometimes Permissible," Says Sir Archibald Strong

Sir Archibald Strong (professor of English language and literature at Adelaide University) is not in full agreement with opinions regarding the use of the King's English as expressed in an article in "The News" on Wednesday.

"It is undoubtedly true," he said in an interview today, "that loose English is often employed by public men in Britain, Australia, and most other countries, but it would be sheer priggishness to ban colloquialisms entirely from a platform utterance or a newspaper interview."

"Frequent or clumsy use of slang," continued Sir Archibald, "should always be condemned, but language which would be entirely out of place in a formal context would be permissible, and sometimes even desirable, in familiar speech, whether public or private. It would be the very puerility of pedantry to exclude the expressive and agreeable word 'movies' from one's familiar utterance."

"Such a great master of style as the late Prof. Sir Walter Raleigh, of Oxford, dealt skilfully and joyously in slang in certain of his platform utterances."

"The man who fears to take occasional liberties with the language," added Sir Archibald, "cannot be said to be its master, or to feel completely at home with it. For the weaker brethren, however, rigidity is probably a safe rule."

"The author of the article shown to me condemns the phrase 'a lot of unemployment,' as recently used by a certain clergyman, and says that the word 'lot' is best left alone, except in the sense in which it is commonly used by the auctioneer. The Concise Oxford Dictionary, however, which speaks with the highest authority, admits the word for colloquial use in the

meaning of 'considerable number or amount, good, or great deal.' The clergyman in question is, therefore, clearly within his rights.

"Even in certain kinds of written speech colloquialisms are admissible. If the essays of Charles Lamb or of William Hazlitt were shorn of these they would lose half of their raciness and gusto. For example, both of these writers use the phrase, 'an other-guess thing,' which is borrowed from the slang of their period."

"Prof. R. W. Chambers, one of the greatest scholars and stylists in England today, when writing about the connection between epic and romance, makes use of the sentence, 'You cannot make a Rolls-Royce out of half a dozen motor bikes.' These liberties, however, are permitted only to the artist—the man who is a master of his craft."

"In contradistinction," concluded Sir Archibald, "the writer of the article would doubtless do well to remain within the limitations which he himself has prescribed."

[The article referred to was written by Rev. Bro. Le Breton.—Ed.]

Critic to Critic

EXPRESSIVE SLANG

(By Rev. Bro. Le Breton)

The interview which Sir Archibald Strong gave to "The News" yesterday makes interesting reading. I write, not to disprove what Sir Archibald says, for I am quite in accord with it, but to point out that additional emphasis is given to what I wrote on the subject of the loose use of English by Sir Archibald's ruling that it is "sometimes permissible."

My objection was to the frequent use of slang expressions by men speaking to the nation as British statesmen, and leaders in the land such as university professors, bishops, and clergy speaking to cultured Adelaide in the careless manner of the quarryman or the coalheaver.

The professor mentions a few cases in which slang might be used with good effect. I deplore the frequent use of it by leaders of thought who are not merely side-stepping into the bypaths of language and using a reasonable liberty as artists of the language, untrammelled for the while by the rigidity of set forms, but are following the unthinking lead of "Snug the joiner, Peter Starveling the tailor, and Bottom the weaver."

The news that the Concise Oxford Dictionary has widened the powers of the word "lot" is not consoling, for it gives rise to the fear that "got" may later on receive similar treatment, and that "bust" may be allowed to express alike the idea of the calamity of Tyre and Sidon, and the common accident to a motor tyre.

To the minds of many the regularisation of "lot" to convey the meaning of considerable number, or great deal, is in the realm of language as great a calamity as the turning of Lot's wife into a pillar of salt was in the social life of Segar.

Got should surely receive the same treatment as lot, for "They grew in beauty side by side."

GEOLOGY OF STATE

Fine Work by Prof. Howchin

For students of geology and all who are interested in the definition and classification of minerals, rocks, and fossils, and evolutionary stages through which earth in South Australia has passed from the earliest days to the present, "The Geology of South Australia," compiled by Prof. Walter Howchin, and printed by Gillingham & Co., Limited, Adelaide, should be an invaluable guide.

The second edition, which has just been published, has been revised and enlarged. It is a complete work, amply illustrated, and covering a vast field. As the author points out, it is impossible to understand the geology of one State without some knowledge of the geology of Australia as a whole, and he has wisely included concise summaries of the geological occurrences in the other Australian States.

These afford a useful addition and a help to the teacher in making a comparative study of the geology of Australia. The work is intended primarily as a text book, but it is hoped that it may meet the requirements of an ever-increasing number of the general public, who desire to have a general acquaintance with the principles of geology as well as the main geological features of their own country.

Most of the examples and illustrations are of a local character, thus giving the presentation of facts an Australian aspect. Rocks most extensively represented in South Australia, states the author in his preface, belong to the Cambrian and pre-Cambrian systems, which, from their great age and extensive deformations, involve structural problems of great difficulty.

"It is unfortunate," he adds, "that the areas which are least disturbed and which offer the most pleasing fields for investigation are situated in the Flinders Ranges, or still farther north, where they are difficult of access and occupy exceptionally rough country."

Beginning with definitions, physiographical outlines, and a table of stratified rocks, Prof. Howchin, who is a recognised authority on his subject, leads his reader on by easy stages. Examples throughout the volume are well presented, and assist the reader or teacher greatly. The book is one which could with benefit be used by all scholastic institutions. Its chief feature, from the viewpoint of the student, is the simple language in which it is couched, and concise manner in which facts are given.

URRBRAE HIGH SCHOOL

IMPORTANT AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

COMPREHENSIVE MODERN SCHEME

The Government are completing arrangements for the erection of a comprehensive agricultural high school on the most modern lines at Urrbrae.

The Minister of Education (Mr. McIntosh) stated on Friday what, with the Director of Education (Mr. W. T. McCoy) and the Architect-in-Chief (Mr. A. E. Simpson), he would leave Adelaide on Monday on a visit to New South Wales to inspect some of the agricultural high schools there, for the purpose of gaining first-hand information of the types of buildings and the methods employed in their working. This would assist him in connection with the establishment of the agricultural high school to be erected at Urrbrae. The provision of that institution would constitute an important forward movement in relation to the agricultural and general development policy of the Government. Upon his return from New South Wales plans for the building would be completed. Provision would be made in them for accommodation for the principal and also for boarders from the country districts. At present there were agricultural high schools at Balaklava and Renmark to serve those districts, but the Urrbrae institution would be open to students from all parts of the State.

A Magnificent Gift

The gift of land by Mr. Peter Waite for the purpose was a very valuable one, and the Government were anxious that the best possible use should be made of it. Under arrangements with the Waite Agricultural Research Institute the greater portion of the land was at present being utilised for agricultural and pastoral experiment purposes, and in return the institute would make the services of its scientists available to the school for demonstration purposes, which, with the experimental plots practically surrounding the institution, should prove of the utmost advantage to the students. The provision of an institution of that type must necessarily involve a considerable expenditure, and it was therefore imperative that the Education Department should start it on right lines, in which it would be guided by the experience of similar schools elsewhere. The Director of Education, on his trip abroad some time ago, had, by direction of the Government, devoted considerable attention to the matters of agricultural high schools and vocational guidance, to both of which the Government were now giving active and practical attention.

BUREAU OF ECONOMICS

TO BE ESTABLISHED IN QUEENSLAND

PROFESSOR MELVILLE TO REPORT

Brisbane, July 5. The Premier (Mr. Moore) announced to-day that the Government, in pursuance of their proposal to establish a Bureau of Statistics and Economics, had made arrangements for the services of Professor L. A. Melville, professor of economics at the Adelaide University, to be placed at their disposal temporarily, to make a preliminary investigation into, and report on, the scheme.

Professor Melville, the Premier said, would arrive in Brisbane about the second week in August, and it was expected that he would be able to complete his investigations and make his recommendations in about three weeks.

EMPIRE MARKETING BOARD

SUGGESTED CLOSING DOWN

LONDON, July 4. In the House of Commons to-day Mr. Manders suggested that economies might be effected by closing down the Empire Marketing Board.

Mr. Snowden said while he would not exclude that matter from review, he could not give an undertaking on the subject at present.