THE NEWS

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 27, 1928

PRIZES IN EDUCATION

(By Prof. W. K. Hancock)

A few weeks ago one of the local newspapers coined a new phrase for the famous University of Oxford—"that home of snobbery and scabbery, Oxford." The phrase was certainly original, yet not altogether apt. Its author seems to have been inspired (we must grant him inspiration) by an unshakable conviction that the Prime Minister of Australia had enjoyed an Oxford education. Thus do political enmities cloud our judgments.

How many Australians realise that the prize of three years' residence at Oxford may fall to any keen schoolboy? Toward the end of every year Rhodes scholarship committees in all States of the Commonwealth make a careful search for the man—not a mere bookworm and not a mere athlete, but one who is better than either—whom they can best trust to represent at Oxford his University and State.

Usually the man chosen has already spent three or perhaps four years at his home University. I think that a large proportion of Australian Rhodes scholars have been holders of State bursaries. I know that in Victoria, in five consecutive years, the Rhodes scholarship was awarded to men who had paid their own way through school and university. That is not the best way of putting it: the State had paid for them. In Australia the State considers it good business to choose the most promising boys and girls and give them the best available education free of charge.

Bursaries and Scholarships

With our system of bursaries and scholarships the poorest boy may achieve anything. Village Miltons need not be mute and inglorious: Cromwells may emerge and be guilty of their nation's blood. Of course, it fortunately remains true that not everybody is a hidden Cromwell or a frustrated Milton. Poverty is no bar against winning the great prizes: but not every poor boy can be a prizewinner.

The whole fascination of prizes depends on the fact that there are not too many of them, just as the whole delight of football depends on the difficulty of kicking goals. If the opposing sides in a football match suddenly joined forces and helped each other they could pile up hundreds and even thousands of goals in an afternoon's play. But would it still be play? Would the goals be worth kicking?

Perhaps there are not enough prizes for which young Australians may compete. Our democracy has aimed at good average quality. We have tried to secure a "fair and reasonable" life for the great mass of our citizens. That is a fine ideal, and it would be a pity if we grew tired of pursuing it.

Leaders for Democracy

But it is not enough. If we grow careless, the ideal of "fair and reasonable" may dwindle into a lazy contentment with mediocrity. A democracy must produce its own leaders, and to do so it must make opportunities for its ablest men. This is, of course, a platitude. But sometimes platitudes need to be repeated. Why is it that psychologists are giving so much attention to idiots and imbeciles, and fight shy of the search for genius? Why is it that so few of the students in our universities take an honors degree? Do we not force many of our best men to seek a career outside Australia?

Perhaps we should increase the number of bursaries and scholarships. But then, what are we to do with those who win them? Hitherto there has not been much scope for the best graduates from our universities. Perhaps a change is coming now. The imagination of Australia has been caught by that rather vague word "research," and the technical branches of the civil services are looking to universities for a supply of trained men. It will be a long time before there is a glut of foresters or entomologists or agricultural chemists.

Administrative Services

But what of the ordinary administrative services? I was impressed by the evidence which Mr. Bland, of Sydney, gave to the Royal Commission on the Constitution.

"On the one hand," he said, "the State is urging its children to stay at school and proceed to higher educational institutions; on the other, it is offering inducements to boys and girls to leave and enter the lower divisions of the Civil Service. If they decide to pursue their studies scholars find that, except for certain professional and technical appointments, the doors of the service are closed to them when they have graduated from the university. I submit that the State cannot afford to neglect the ability of this class of student, and that provision should be made whereby a limited number of recruits from the university should be admitted to the service every year for the administrative posts."

It seems that we are rather stupid in the prizes we give. Attached to them is a condition—"No prizewinner may serve the State." Is this altogether democratic, and is it good business? The brightest of our boys win scholarships and enter the universities. There they grow in wisdom—and grow too old to get jobs. Only the schools will find room for them.

So they go back to the schools and teach other bright boys who win scholarships and enter the universities, and go back to the schools and teach other bright boys who win scholarships and enter the universities, and go back to the schools and teach other bright boys who . . . .

And so on for ever and ever. Shall we never break the circle?

THE NEWS

SATURDAY, JUNE 22, 1929

COST OF BOOKS

(By R. C. Bald, Lecturer in English at Adelaide University)

The remarks of Prof. W. K. Hancock in this column a fortnight ago about the present state of Australian literature produced a certain measure of dissent.

The most interesting of the dissenters was the writer of a letter pointing out that some of the difficulties of the Australian writer are economic: the overseas market does not want books that are primarily Australian in their appeal, and the cost of book production here is so great that a local publisher needs substantial guarantees before he will publish, and even then he has no hope of competing successfully with the great publishing houses in Britain and America.

The Australian, who is so accustomed to a high tariff wall that his prevailing system of economics has almost become second nature to him, will at once reply that the obvious remedy is Protection. Protection in the case of books means not merely a tariff, but an alteration of the copyright law to the American system by which any book can attain copyright in the United States only if it is actually printed in that country.

Fortunately our legislators—if, indeed, they have ever given any thought to the matter—have realised that books are not mere merchandise or mere providers of amusement. "A good book is the precious lifeblood of a master spirit," Milton declared; and books preserve a record of all the most important things thought or done in the world. To restrict in any way the circulation of books in Australia would be to cut it off from the rest of the world.

Danger of Tariff

The danger of applying a tariff to these matters of the spirit has already shown itself. That the importation of gramophone records has been curtailed because records are pressed in Australia means that some of the best music is unobtainable. The local firms have the right to manufacture them, but they do not do so, because the records would not have a sufficiently wide sale to pay for the manufacturing. Accordingly the few people who want what they could previously have obtained from abroad must now go without them altogether.

The truth is that books are dear enough in Australia already, and one can hardly feel sympathetic towards any suggestion that would make them more expensive. The local bookseller has to charge about a third more than the English price for imported books, partly because they have to come so far and partly because he has to order a larger stock and take the risk that it will not sell, as he cannot replenish his stock from the publisher at two or three days' notice.

Australian Publishing

A book published in Australia is a sorry sight. Its binding is cheap, the paper seems obviously the wrong sort, and the type is ugly.

It may be that wages costs force the publisher to use the cheapest materials, but I cannot help thinking that the Australian printer of 50 years ago was both a more courageous man and a better craftsman than he is today. Almost any old book printed locally will show this.

Furthermore, our printers have not kept abreast with the recent advances of their craft. For example, there are comparatively few monotype machines in Australia, yet these machines, with their beautiful range of types and wonderfully clear impressions, have elsewhere practically ousted all other printing machines for the finest class of work.

It is not true to say that Australians are uninterested in book production, for the sale of works printed by the finest private presses in England is probably as large, proportionately to our population, as anywhere else in the world.

London Presses

Nevertheless, those who wish to take part in the production of fine books themselves have been forced abroad largely because they cannot obtain their materials here.

The result is that there are in London two presses which are managed by Australians. Mr. Jack Lindsay, a son of Mr. Norman Lindsay, is director of the Fanfrolico Press, which prides itself on the beauty of the workmanship of the books it produces. Mr. Eric Partridge is manager of the Scholartis Press, which is more concerned with learned works, although it has brought out several books by modern and local authors.

The pity of it is that these presses are not in Australia. But it seems that it was paucity of raw materials—printing presses and good paper—which originally forced them abroad, where the essentials of their craft are better and cheaper.

ENGLISH SPEAKING UNION.

"The Best Life."

An interesting address was delivered by Professor J. McKellar Stewart on the inner meaning of the union of the English speaking peoples of the world. He said one should first enquire whether there were any reasons why it should be a perfectly natural thing that there should be friendship between the peoples of the British Commonwealth of nations and those of America. Aristotle specified three degrees of friendship. On the lowest plane was friendship for utility or profit. No individual was economically self sufficient. On a higher plane men formed friendships of pleasure, taking a natural delight for the society of their fellows. On a higher plane still, men formed friendships of goodness, in which friend helped friend to live the best life. Applying these distinctions of friendships between peoples, it might be desirable for America and Great Britain to cultivate an economic friendship. It was safe to say, however, that in a friendship with no other basis the acquisitive impulse was always forcefully present. One could not be satisfied with merely an economic friendship. It was quite obvious that distance debarred the cultivation of a friendship of pleasure in any thorough-going way, despite the "movies," Charlie Chaplin, and Mary Pickford. (Laughter.) There remained, therefore, the relationship in which friend helped friend to live the best life. The basis was not material wealth, and the aim was not utility or profit. Its foundation was to be sought in the spirit of partnership. Were there any spiritual bonds between these two peoples by which they might become mutual helpers to the best life? One had to define what was meant by the best life. According to the Greeks, it was the harmonies and the free development of the specifically human parts. One might perhaps get a lot further than that, but the important fact was that any man in earnest about life knew the best when he saw it. It was believed at present to be the life of international peace, but the mere state of not being at war could not be accepted as an end in itself, and a life of peace was not necessarily the best life. It was, perhaps, an indispensable condition for the unhampered pursuit of the best life. For the making of the earth into a garden instead of a shambles, for the fuller pursuit of education, science, and art. For such things as this international peace was desired. To bring about this condition as a permanent state of affairs was the desire deeply rooted in the minds of every British man. Possibly the most important step towards this end that the world had taken was brought about by a proposal from America. He referred to the Kellogg Pact. The six Great Powers' signatory to this Pact were joined for the purpose of renouncing war as a policy, and submitting disputes to the arbitrament of reason, and dealing with them on the principles of justice. Such a pact was in harmony with the spirit of the British race, begotten of its history that had established that the rule of right and not the rule of force should prevail in human affairs. He doubted if such a proposal could have come with sufficient conviction to make it practicable except from a people inspired by the traditions of the British race. In the same way it was an act of friendship which should bind these two peoples closer together. It behoved one to ask what were the ties between Britain and America which made it natural that they should be mutual helpers in bringing about that best life. The title of the society, "The English Speaking Union," suggested one obvious tie, despite the fact that if one read an account of an American baseball match one might feel as though wandering in a foreign world. (Laughter.) It was a tie which went deeper than one might suppose from merely looking at it. A language was not a mere system of signs but mind or spirit, thought. It was emotion in a tangible, visible, and audib'e form, and the most adequate expression of the spirit of the people. It was natural that the language of the British people should have proved a vehicle for the expression, through William Shakespeare, of drama in its most perfect form. Men clung to their mother tongue with an extraordinarily deep passion. Friendship between peoples could have no firmer basis than that of language and literature. The second tie was that of the British common law on which American law was based. This was more than a meeting point; it was a common source. Time and again America had been able to interpret the mind of Britain to itself. As Walter Page had said, friendship between Governments was well, but it was little. Friendship between peoples was much, and the only true basis of peace. (Applause.)

In thanking Professor McKellar Stewart for his address, the chairman expressed a request that he should present the manuscript to the society, that a permanent record might be made of it in the magazine. Musical items were rendered by Mr. and Mrs. Harold Denton.

WHAT ARE INFRA-RED RAYS?

Prof. Kerr Grant Sees Possibilities

When a ray of scientific intelligence was directed upon and destroyed the alleged Death Ray it gave rise to much scepticism regarding the powers for good or evil of such invisible beams. Prof. Kerr Grant (Professor of Physics at the Adelaide University), however, is by no means incredulous regarding the possibilities of infra-red rays. "It is hard to say what scientists may, or may not, evolve from time to time," he remarked.

Recently directors of British railway companies witnessed in London demonstrations of the adaptation of infra-red rays on model tracks. Trains were stopped by the ray from the permanent way, the beam causing the application of the brakes. Train lights were lit and extinguished as a train entered and emerged from a tunnel.

It is claimed that the ray will make accidents impossible and eliminate the human element; that it can penetrate ice, fog, and snow, and automatically cut off the current of electrified lines, releasing it again when the line is clear ahead.

It spells police with a capital P for the burglar, because it has the power to give warning of unlawful entry upon premises without him knowing that he has been electrically detected. The system is reported to be economic and cheap to install, and the necessary power obtainable from a single wire along existing telegraph poles.

"Infra-red rays, or heat waves," explained Prof. Grant, "are identical with ordinary light, except that the wavelength of the radiation is such that the retina of the eye is no longer affected.

"Human eyes have so evolved that they are sensitive to a certain range only. Rays with wavelengths much under or above one-fifty-thousandth part of an inch would not be visible to man—the infra-red ray is probably one-ten-thousandth. But such rays may be physically perceived by the sense of feeling, in the same way as one feels the heat from a funnel on a steamer, or that sense of warmth one experiences when one approaches any hot body. But today there are instruments which far exceed in sensitivity this human faculty of perception.

"This is what leads to the undoing of the burglar. The radiation from the body of a human being may be detected by means of these instruments several hundred feet, probably yards, away. The thermopile, constructed of extremely thin strips of metal, or very fine wires, is sensitive to the heat from a man's body, and in turn passes on the effect to an instrument known as a relay, in which a small current operates a contact piece, thus opening or closing a circuit which may carry a heavy current of sufficient power to operate magnetic controls of throttles, switches, and the like, apply brakes, shut off steam, and perform other wonders.

"In the case of a burglar alarm it may warn the nearest police station, the watchman at some point, or, in the case of a private residence, the householder who may have a device beneath the pillow of his bed.

"In war time the movements of troops at night could be detected. Here the galvanometer, an instrument for measuring the presence, extent, and direction of an electric current, plays a leading part. The heat from the bodies of the troops would affect the instruments, as in the case of the burglar, and the galvanometer would betray their position.

"Another instrument, the radiomicrometer, can detect the heat from a candle three miles away. It is similar to the thermopyle. We conducted an experiment at our last Conversazione. Placing a small electric lamp at the focus of one concave mirror the heat rays were directed to a similar mirror at the other end of the room, and from there concentrated upon the face of a thermopile connected to a sensitive galvanometer. The galvanometer indicated that the ray would have been detected at 10 times the distance."

Owing to the range of the infra-red ray being a few miles at the outside, Prof. Grant could not visualise the Germans directing the course of an unmanned Zeppelin over London, and controlling its bomb-dropping, or performing other such remarkable feats.

"It is not possible now," he remarked, "but it might be in 100 years' time. Remarkable improvements in the construction of thermopiles by a Dutch physicist (Dr. W. J. H. Moll), of Utrecht, have made recent developments possible."

Prof. Kerr Grant admitted the possibility of infra-red rays controlling, within short range, balloons or the like, and regulating the dropping of bombs on the enemy. "But I am not in favor of science being used for such purposes," he concluded.

ECONOMIC EQUILIBRIUM.

LECTURE BY MR. H. G. OLIPHANT.

Mr. H. G. Oliphant lectured to members of the Workers' Educational Association at the Anatomy Theatre, University of Adelaide, last night. His subject was "A Search for Economic Equilibrium." Mr. F. Goring was in the chair.

The lecturer pointed out that although most people avoided economic subjects, the importance of the economic factor was paramount, since the greater part of man's daily activities were devoted to its consideration. Political economy was formerly termed the dismal science, mainly because of the conclusions arrived at by Malthus and Ricardo. The reason of this was identical with the reason of referring to Dean Inge as the "gloomy Dean"—he called attention to unpalatable facts at times, and saw no hope for their correction in the existing conditions. Views of individualists, and of adherents of various socialistic teachings, were referred to by the lecturer, who suggested that the ordinary individual disliked theories, and preferred plain explanations and compromise. In this he was reflecting more truly the life of his age and the nature of his environment than the theorist concerned with ideal conditions. Economic science was the study of the directive principles of human desires. It was the ideas of man that gave shape and form to all the material conditions of life and labor. Material facts were but shadows, the ideas that shaped them the reality, and to change the outer fact they must change the inner fact. Ideas changed but slowly, and therefore, evolution of social and economic institutions was a slow process.

The lecturer applied this principle to pressing economic problems of the day, dealing particularly with unemployment and business stability. The importance of the influence of credit upon prices was stressed, since there existed a close connection between price movements and unemployment. More effective monetary control was therefore needed, because the State was called upon to provide relief for unemployment caused by the credit policies of private institutions. The communal character of credit was indicated, the community in the last analysis being the controlling factor in industry.

By means of a large diagram the lecturer illustrated the workings of the various factors in production, and demonstrated the need for proper coordination and co-operation between them.

EDUCATION AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS

ADDRESS BY SIR ARCHIBALD STRONG

At the luncheon of the League of Nations Union on Tuesday, Professor Sir Archibald Strong spoke on "Education and Foreign Affairs." Professor Melville occupied the chair, and among those present were the Bishop of Adelaide (Right Rev. Dr. Thomas) and Archdeacon Moyes.

Sir Archibald Strong urged the importance of an organisation to conduct education in the cause of peace. They needed better opportunities for knowing what the various parts of the Empire were doing, and for contradicting mis-statements and clearing up misunderstandings which might easily provoke complications and possibly war. He gave illustrations of unfair statements made by one nation concerning another, and said there should be machinery provided for dealing promptly and authoritatively with such. While in the United States he had found a section of the press publishing inaccurate statements regarding the loyalty of the Dominions to the British Empire, but there was no effective machinery to contradict those allegations. He had taken the matter up with the papers concerned, and had shown Australia's contribution during and since the war in support of the Empire. Education within the Empire was equally important. They must have adult education regarding definite facts. His experience in India was that misunderstandings existed regarding Australia's policy in relation to India. The reasons for the White Australia policy should be made plain to the people of India, and there would be a better feeling between the people of the two countries. This also applied with regard to certain matters between Australia and Canada. If the people of Australia knew the problems which confronted other parts of the Empire, mainly racial, they would be heartened in their task of putting Australian affairs in order. They must try to get a better knowledge of the psychology of the various countries and the reasons for their actions. European psychology was vastly different from that obtaining in Australia. Ignorant sentimentalism would not get them far in the direction of peace. They had in London a Royal Institute of International Affairs which supplied valuable information, but its activities were limited, and they desired for the great intelligent section of the people information which could be provided by the educational institutions.