

## DANGERS OF "TABLOID EDUCATION"

Professor Portus On  
Modern Trends

LEARNING AS "SOCIAL  
PASSPORT"

### W.E.A. Break-Up Addresses

The true purpose of education was the subject of addresses given by the Vice-Chancellor of the University (Sir William Mitchell), Professor G. V. Portus, and other speakers at the annual break-up of the Workers' Educational Association at the Stow Memorial Hall on Saturday night.

Professor Portus strongly criticised the modern emphasis placed on vocational training and what he described as the social snobbery of "tabloid education." There was a large attendance.

The president of the W.E.A. (Mr. H. Ham) said that the tutorial year had been a most successful one, 40 classes having been attended by more than 1,200 students. He thought that the W.E.A. could claim to be doing its share in making Adelaide what it ought to be—a city of culture. One of the most noteworthy advances that the movement had made in recent years had been the inclusion of classes for the study of the natural sciences. He regretted, however, that the classes in economics had fallen off during the year. Although it had to be admitted that the study of economics had so far failed to provide a panacea for the depression which the world was still passing through, it was no less true that in a scientific examination of economic facts lay the only hope of finding such a panacea and, ultimately, a remedy.

#### Catholic Character

The Vice-Chancellor of the University (Sir William Mitchell) said that what struck him most about the work of the W.E.A. was its extremely catholic character. The true function of education was to open up the world to the mind. We were all so occupied with the present that the tendency was to be satisfied with the world as it is, forgetful of the fact that to the mind the past remained the present and that the future could be made the present. The idea of the old Mechanics' Institute, which the W.E.A. had superseded, had been to enable people to "improve their minds." That idea was essentially wrong. It envisaged a study of the mind by a morbid looking within. The mind grew through what it could make its own. He believed they were making a mistake in thinking that education consisted of acquiring more and more knowledge. There were two main purposes of education. The first was knowledge and instruction; the second, exercise and discipline of the mind. The interest in knowledge lay in acquiring it, not in the possession of it. There was nothing staler than knowledge once you had it. It was to be valued not for itself, but as a means to an end. Knowledge became faculty and faculty became facility to consider the problems with which the mind was normally confronted. Knowledge was the pioneering work of the mind, whose true worth was appreciation and, more still, action. By expounding those principles the W.E.A., he thought, was engaged in the most wonderful work which the world had to offer.

#### Education in Machine Age

Professor Portus said that during his long association with the W.E.A. he had become aware of two dangers that were threatening it. The first he described as professionalism, vocationalism, or careerism. It was to be seen in the attitude that approached education with the question, "What can I get out of it?" He had been frequently asked, in connection with the W.E.A., "Do you teach anything that would help me in my job?" or, since 1929, "anything that would help me to get a job?" Such people regarded education as something that would help them, for instance, to sell more vacuum cleaners or more insurances. There were others who sought education because they believed it was a social passport. It was a sort of social snobbery, which was commoner than most people supposed. Whenever he was told that what was needed more than ever today was technical education, he pointed out that this was a machine age. The machine was everywhere displacing human labor, and so rapidly was the process going on that there was no guarantee that any particular technical training that might be required today would not be quite useless ten years hence. During the last five years the world had witnessed

the spectacle of thousands, even millions, of men thrown out of employment, not because they did not have the requisite technical skill, but because the machinery of distribution had broken down.

#### Tabloid Education

We were living in an age of hurry, an age of "quick turnover and rapid returns." Professor Portus said, and there were many people who wanted to see the popular slogans of the time applied also to education. They wanted a tabloid education. It was all right to put things in a nutshell if they were no bigger than a nut. (Laughter.) It was this tendency toward the tabloid in education that had produced the potted textbook, the lecture that "takes you to the heart of any subject within an hour," and, to quote a typical advertisement, "twenty of the world's classics on one shelf." There was a great deal of quackery about, and Carlyle had truly said that the only people taken in by quackery were those who had quackery in their own souls. One of the most important aims of education was to eliminate quackery from our own souls. At present we were just sufficiently literate to be taken in by quack advertising, which sought to make us, in the jargon of the day, "culturally conscious."

#### "An End in Itself"

Education, as Sir William Mitchell had said, was not a means to anything, but an end in itself. Professor Portus said. If people would regard it as such they would find that it illuminated everything they touched. It would mean greater understanding and greater efficiency; it would mean that their nationalism would be more wide, their patriotism more fine, and their socialism more rational. Education was, above all, an adventure. There was a great truth behind the old legend of the driving forth of Adam and Eve because they had eaten the fruit from the tree of knowledge. Some people were afraid to taste that fruit. The adventure was not for them, but to those who were not afraid of sacrifice and the humiliation of being forced at perhaps every corner along the road to shed their old views and to acquire new ones; it beckoned irresistibly. (Applause.)

Mr. E. G. Biaggini, director of tutorial classes, said that he joined with Professor Portus in his attack on spurious culture, which today seemed so prevalent. His own view was that five persons to every three preferred nonsense to sense. Culturally anarchy reigned. It was against this citadel of affectation, shortsightedness and bad taste that the work of the W.E.A. was directed.

A musical programme was provided by the following members of the Adelaide Music Club:—Lillian Pether and Helen Magarey (violin), Etta Grigg (viola), Juliet Savage (cello), Muriel Prince, Constance Pether and Dr. P. Rav Newling.

Adv 30-10-34

#### PUBLIC EXAMINATIONS

The University of Adelaide Intermediate, Leaving, and Leaving Honors examinations for 1934 will begin on November 27, and continue until December 10, when the written examinations will end. Examinations will begin each day at 9.30 a.m. and 2 p.m. The Leaving Honors practical chemistry examinations will begin at 1.30 p.m. The dates for oral French and oral German will be fixed after the entries are received. The approximate number of candidates sitting for the examinations this year will be 4,187—Intermediate 2,700, Leaving 1,300, Leaving Honors 187. Last year's figures were:—Intermediate 2,759, Leaving 1,386, Leaving Honors 268—a total of 4,413. Lists of names of candidates and their distinctive numbers will be posted at the University at least a week before the date fixed for the beginning of the examination.

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#### MUSIC PRIZES

The Council of the University of Adelaide has divided between Dorothea Mary Angus and Lloyd Winston Vick the prize which is awarded to the candidate who passes best as an executant in the Licentiate Examination at the public examinations in music, conducted last month by the Australian Music Examinations Board. The exhibitions, which are awarded to the most promising candidates in the theory examinations at Grade III, and Grade IV, standard, have been awarded to Patricia Mary Tribe and Gwenyth Noble, respectively.

## Centenary Plan To Invite Scientists

SIR Douglas Mawson, president-elect of the Australian and New Zealand Association for the Advancement of Science, announced today that he would propose when the association meets in Melbourne early next year, that the British Society for the Advancement of Science should be invited to visit South Australia during the State's centenary celebrations in 1936.

"It is now 20 years since the society met in Australia, and there is strong feeling that another visit should be conducted," said Sir Douglas. "There are many arguments to support the proposal, and why should not the meeting be held during South Australia's centenary?"

"If the offer were accepted—and several members have personally told me that they would like to see Australia again—at least 200 scientists would make the journey in addition to their families."

South Australia had unique features, which would attract leading scientists from all over the world, said Sir Douglas. It was not necessary to go to other parts of the world to have discussions on such sciences as mathematics, physics, and chemistry, but exchange trips enlightened and broadened outlooks.

The visit would also keep Australia in touch with the rest of the world, and it was very necessary for scientists to travel about the universe from time to time.

#### METEORITE CRATERS

"There is nothing in the world quite like the remarkable Henbury meteorite craters in the north of South Australia, and the possibility of taking part in an excursion to those craters would prove a great inducement to scientists," said the professor.

"Some remarkable discoveries have also been made in ancient life of the botanic type. Palaeo-botanists can scarcely believe that we have such ancient fossil forms, and they are anxious to be convinced in their own eyes."

"My idea is for the society to make South Australia its hub, and for excursions lasting one or two weeks to be made into the country. Subsidiary meetings could be held in Melbourne and Sydney. Scientists would come from every part of the British Empire and elsewhere to such a meeting."

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Sir Douglas Mawson, Professor in Geology and Mineralogy at the University of Adelaide, and a member of the Royal Geographical Society, has been appointed president-elect of the forthcoming meeting of the Australian and New Zealand Association for the Advancement of Science, to be held in Melbourne next year.

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Professor A. K. Macbeth, the Angus Professor in Chemistry at the University of Adelaide, left for England yesterday by the Hobsons Bay. During his trip abroad he will visit many English universities.

Adv. 1-11-34

The Vice-Chancellor of the University of Adelaide (Sir William Mitchell) will sail today by the Otranto for England, where he intends to spend the University long vacation. He will visit his family in England. During his stay there Sir William Mitchell will give the philosophical address for the year before the British Academy in London. His subject will be "The Quality of Life."

## Doctors Will Be Available

### REPORTED MOVE

"You can take it from me that there will be an ample supply of house surgeons at the Adelaide Hospital next year," said a University medical student today.

He was commenting on a report that medical students who will sit for their final examinations next week had been asked to give a signed undertaking that they would work at the Adelaide Hospital after completing the University course.

Officials declined to comment on the report. Several students refused to confirm the report. They said they did not want to "antagonise any of the authorities."

On October 2, four house surgeons resigned from the Adelaide Hospital because of dissatisfaction. The hospital was unable to secure young doctors from other States, and 12 fourth and fifth year medical students took up duties at the hospital.

Adv. 2-11-34

### Lady Dugan Visits University

In the Lady Symon Hall yesterday, the Adelaide University Wives' Association gave a morning tea in honor of Lady Dugan, who paid her first visit to the new University buildings. Bowls containing fine blooms of roses comprised the floral decorations, which were arranged across the front of the stage and on the tables. Lady Dugan was received by the president of the association (Mrs. A. E. V. Richardson), who presented her with a bouquet of golden emblem roses tied with blue and gold ribbons. Lady Dugan said that she looked forward to attending similar happy gatherings. The speakers included Lady Mawson and the president of the Adelaide University Women's Union (Miss Madeline Angel).

Lady Dugan, who was accompanied by Miss Roberts, wore a charming and simple putty and brown ensemble. A smart brown bow tied in front of the bodice matched her striking brown straw hat. Mrs. Richardson chose a frock of navy crepe de chine under a smartly cut navy silk coat, with a deep red hat made of fine straw.

The guests included Miss Murray, Lady Mawson, Mrs. R. W. Chapman, Mesdames A. Grenfell Price, R. C. Robin, T. Harvey Johnston, A. Killen Macbeth, John Horner, C. Stanton Hicks, S. W. Pennycuik, Miss Madeline Angel, Mesdames R. E. P. Barbour, F. W. Eardley, Alex Burnard, E. Harold Davies, J. G. Davies, Kerr Grant, Dr. Helen Mayo, Mesdames C. T. Madigan, G. V. Portus, R. S. Burdon, E. V. Clark, W. T. Cooke, J. Crampton, D. B. Adam, I. F. Phipps, H. C. Trumble, H. W. Gartrell, T. T. Colquhoun, R. J. Best, and A. Walkley.

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## WHAT IS GENIUS?

### Mystery Of The Musica Prodigy

## DOES WIRELESS HELP?

Dr. E. Harold Davies, Elder Professor of Music at the Adelaide University, here reverts to the subject of the three child prodigies whose discovery he announced in an article contributed to "The Advertiser" a few days ago. His reflections upon the nature of genius itself, have been suggested by its manifestation in the children whose musical powers he finds so amazing.

#### By E. HAROLD DAVIES

Interest has been aroused in many minds by the recently published account of exceptional musical ability in children of tender age. What is the provoking cause of this manifestation? Are such powers an immediate product of the times in which they appear, or are they conceivably a portent of some imminent development in the art of music? We know that Nature usually adapts herself to prevailing conditions, and the needs arising therefrom. We