

The Advertiser
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Perth Sunday Times
September

232

HIGHER EDUCATION.

A VICTORIAN SCHEME.

Melbourne, September 28.

The State Cabinet has had placed before it a new scheme of scholarships drawn up by the Council of Education at the request of the Minister. The new scheme provides for 400 scholarships to be awarded annually. The present number is 90, apart from technical schools and teacher scholarships. The holders of the new scholarships will have free tuition at the State higher elementary and district high schools, registered secondary schools, lower and higher technical schools, and the University. Freedom will be given to 160 of them to attend schools other than State schools. The free education will give admission to the trades, to higher technical pursuits, to the teaching service, to the University, and to the professions. The estimated cost is as follows:—1914, £12,500; 1915, £16,200; 1916, £19,150; 1917, £21,000; 1918, £23,050. Under the present scheme the annual cost is £7,500. It is claimed that every branch of education has been considered, and that pupils will be able to go from the elementary to the secondary schools or the University at little or no cost to their parents. As far as the State is concerned, the estimates indicate that it is much cheaper to grant scholarships than to establish high schools in small centres poorly provided with travelling facilities.

Daily Herald
30/9/13

VARIOUS VIEWS

THE UNIVERSITY AND DEGREE EXAMINATIONS.

"Undergraduate" writes:—"The University of Adelaide is fairly liberal in its treatment of students, but such liberality could be increased with benefit to intending students at least. At the present time an undergraduate who is unable to attend lectures may be given exemption, under certain circumstances, from attending lectures in one subject per year, but must visit Adelaide for the purpose of attending examinations. But why should the University authorities limit the concession to one subject a year? And if the authorities will trust local centres with the control of the public examinations, could they not also trust them with the control of degree examinations? Under the present system hardship is inflicted on country students. Here is an illustration from an actual case. A student living several hundreds of miles from Adelaide, but at a "local centre," has exemption in one subject, but is told he must attend for examination in Adelaide. The examination fees are 2s, travelling expenses and board would increase the amount to nearly £10. The Adelaide student would only have to pay £5. Many would-be students are debarred from proceeding to their degree because of this increased expense. If country students, unable to go to Adelaide for a University course, were allowed exemption in the two subjects per year, and were also allowed to go for examination at local centres, I have no doubt that many country teachers and country ministers would be glad to read for their degree. The concession would be of the utmost value to teachers, for there seems little doubt that in the near future a degree will become essential to progress in the Education Department. If the University authorities could be made to see that there is a need for this concession, probably they would make it."

THE JARRAH UNIVERSITY

Disappointment of the Dominies and Dons

A Staff Without Appliances—And With Very Few Students

Apparently the West Australian University started before it was ready, and as a consequence the whole thing so far savors of comic opera of the Gilbertian type. We have eight professors and four lecturers located in a jarrah barracks with an average of less than 10 students each, and no means of carrying on the scientific lectures in a scientific manner. There are no laboratories or equipment of any sort, and it is utterly impossible to confer real degrees until these things are available. As a matter of fact, the W.A. University is in existence only in name and for the purpose of wrangling over the ultimate site. It is very much like the Federal capital, inasmuch as each is an expensive toy, played with by persons who want to gratify vicarious glory and to achieve a posthumous prominence by associating their names with public institutions that are calculated to become historical.

There is no doubt in the minds of those looking on at the game that the W.A. University should not have been inaugurated until it was prepared to teach. Indeed, there are many who consider that the appointment of the professors and lecturers should not have been made until some decent building was available for the work. We will not go so far as to say that the permanent University buildings should have been erected, because we are quite certain that such an indeterminate sentence was not necessary. But we do say that the essential equipment should have been provided.

When Mr. H. Gunn, who organised the University, started his work we believe he had no more than £10,000 at his back. Just imagine the farce of expecting a great scholastic institution to be established on such a paltry financial foundation! Prior to coming to this State Mr. Gunn had been engaged in founding the University at Bloemfontein in South Africa, and the first vote for the purpose was no less than £150,000. Yet here, in W.A., we ask a man to make a start with £10,000! Can there be any wonder there is only chaos and impotence at the garish wooden structure on St. George's-terrace?

It is admitted that the staff is a very able one, equal to that of any University in Australasia. The gentlemen appointed are not only distinguished graduates of other Universities, but they have eminent records since taking their degrees, and are also marked by a combination of learning and modernity which augurs well for the eventual results of their work in this State; but the best workmen must have the best tools if they are to turn out the best articles.

The professors and lecturers have not got these media, and if we are not very much mistaken they are the most disappointed and disgusted people connected with this premature attempt to create a crowning temple of knowledge to the all-embracing system of education in W.A. They must feel absolutely ridiculous. We know that the resources of the Technical School were placed at the service of the Professor of Chemistry, but for some reason or other the Senate declined the offer,

and preferred to continue the present farce.

It may be that the Senate or somebody had a dread that if it was demonstrated that the University and the Technical School could work with the same laboratories the provision of the apparatus for the University would be indefinitely delayed. Well, why not? They haven't decided upon a site yet, and the rest would not matter provided that satisfactory arrangements could be made with the Technical School. In fact, it would be true economy, for there is no earthly reason why we should have a duplication of the laboratories and so forth.

Here we are a small community as yet, with about 320,000 people in the whole of the State, and to anyone outside it must seem absurd that we should have two sets of scientific appliances doing practically the same work. Indeed, it is clear that a huge mistake has been made in not making the Technical School the nucleus of the University; but that would not have had such a grandiloquent effect, and those who were out for glory and puff rejected any such idea as utility and effectiveness and common-sense.

At present time we have the spectacle of two institutions for the one object—the attainment of University degrees. The Technical School has all along trained students in chemistry, physics and mathematics for the Adelaide University. It is doing so now, at this moment. The students themselves prefer to go up for the Adelaide degrees, because the University there is properly established, and the degrees enjoy a prestige which the W.A. University cannot acquire until it is properly equipped and has proved its mettle. At the same time our new and chaotic University is supposed to be preparing students for the science degrees. It is ridiculous.

If the University had been engrafted on to the Technical School—which was quite feasible, for if that school can train graduates for the Adelaide University surely it will be admitted that it can do so for the W.A. University—then we should have had the scheme of higher instruction in full swing and the present unsatisfactory condition of things would have been avoided. As it is, the University started with a roll of some 200 students. Everyone who went along was listed, but it was found that not more than 50 per cent. were educationally fit to go on with University work, and the number is now only a little over 100.

Of these about 60 are from the Training College at Claremont, so that a meagre roll of 40 has come from the public. We are hardly surprised, because those who are in earnest about getting knowledge prefer the Technical School, where the means are provided. Nor can we see that there is much hope in the immediate future. The Government is on the financial rocks, and cannot possibly find money to start the real buildings or instal the scientific equipment necessary. Thus, through the impetuous vainglory of the Chancellor, we have the comical position of a highly-efficient staff without appliances and practically without students!

It is altogether ludicrous, but rather to be wept over than laughed at.