

WORKERS' EDUCATIONAL ASSOCIATION.

THE AIMS OF THE MOVEMENT.

EXTENSION TO SOUTH AUSTRALIA.

Mr. Albert Mansbridge, M.A. (secretary of the British Workers' Educational Association), delivered an address at the Trades Hall on Friday evening explanatory of the work of the association. On the platform were Professor Mitchell (representing the Chancellor of the University), Professor Henderson, Professor Jethro Brown, Assistant Chief Inspector Charlton of the Education Department, Messrs. C. Vaughan, M.P., the Hon. A. W. Styles, M.L.C. (leaders of the Opposition), and members of both Houses of the State Legislature, representatives of the council of the School of Mines, the A.N.A., the Trades and Labor Council, trades unions, and the Council of Churches. Mr. T. Ryan (president of the Trades and Labor Council) occupied the chair, and the hall was filled by an interested audience.

Mr. Mansbridge, who was accorded an ovation when he rose to speak, said education was not knowledge; it was that which helped men to rise physically, mentally, and spiritually to a higher sphere of influence. Education made for comradeship. There had been some opposition to education in England, because it was considered that education was but a means to assist men to get on. Getting on was an excellent thing sometimes, but some people got on to the expense of others, and that was not a good thing. The educated man could not do that, though some men who had knowledge could do it. There were some people who knew a good deal, and damaged the community in their own selfish interests. (Hear, hear.) The persons who promoted the movement he represented had said labor and scholarship were one and indivisible. He dipped into the history of the Workers' Educational Association from its formation in 1903. In ten years the movement had so advanced that there were now 150 branches in England, and there were 2,146 societies and other bodies affiliated. He had not come to speak of a great conquest in England, but he had come to tell Australia that an experiment had been successfully initiated in the old country, and he had come with a great yearning to get Australia to link up. What had the association done? In England there were but 5,000 working men in university tutorial classes, and 50,000 working men under educational influence. It was not much, but it was a sign which encouraged hope. The association was not for the educated man, but to develop the desire in people to reach out to something better. The object was not to have a community of scholars; such a thing was unthinkable. He was glad to say that the working women in England were beginning to value education. He hoped the women would always go in for domestic economy and cooking, but they had a right to listen to the nation's song and to imbibe the greatest thoughts of men. The women of England, he was glad to say, were tired of penny novelettes and the papers that recorded not the best and purest things in life. They sought now the best that there was in literature. When the women were interested in Eden the men also would soon be so. The problem that faced them in England was the education of the rural population. The countryman of the old land had been left too long to himself and to the village inn.

Mr. Mansbridge spoke of one meeting of rural workers he had addressed in Gloucestershire. He asked the gathering what they would like to learn, and a number of hands were raised—good old English hands that had been used to holding ploughs—and these old farm laborers said they wanted to learn shorthand. That showed the effect of the town influence. They had thought it would please him if they said they wanted to learn something like that. He wished people would not always say what would please, but what was the truth. Speaking of the results achieved by the association, he said he would like to take his hearers to Oxford or Cambridge or Durham, where they could see working men and women in the University classes. Throughout Australia he had found the working men and women were quite as anxious to have education as their brothers and sisters in England. The University must make common cause with the people,

or something would go wrong. The future of Australia depended upon the beauty of the minds of the common folk, and unless the minds of those people were developed the future of the Australian Commonwealth would be far less glorious and far more full of pain and sorrow than it should be.

Mr. Ryan moved—"That this meeting expresses its appreciation of the work done by the Workers' Educational Association, as outlined by Mr. Mansbridge, and urges the Trades and Labor Council to bring a similar association into being in South Australia."

Mr. J. Burgess (vice-president of the Trades and Labor Council) seconded the motion, which was carried with enthusiasm.

Professor Mitchell, in thanking Mr. Mansbridge said both the council and the staff of the University were in sympathy with the movement.

Cheers were given for Mr. and Mrs. Mansbridge.

Mr. Mansbridge, in replying, said the welcome he and his wife had received in this State had been perfect. It had been a welcome of labor and scholarship in all its strength. He was glad to be speaking in that hall, because he was a trades unionist. (Cheers.)

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EDUCATING THE WORKERS

MR. MANSBRIDGE'S MISSION

ENTHUSIASTIC TRADES HALL RECEPTION.

Representatives of the University, the School of Mines, the Education Department, the Parliamentary Labor Party, the Trades and Labor Council, the A.N.A., the Council of Churches, and the various model parliaments rubbed shoulders on the platform of the main hall of the Trades Hall last night, when Mr. A. Mansbridge, secretary of the Workers' Educational Association, addressed a crowded gathering of Laborites. The president of the Trades and Labor Council (Mr. T. Ryan) was in the chair and briefly introduced the speaker.

Mr. Mansbridge claimed that education was not merely a knowledge; it was the force which enabled men to rise physically, mentally, and spiritually to a higher influence. An educated man desired to do his best for others. Education made for comradeship, and was not merely a device to enable people to get on. Getting on was all very well, but sometimes people got on at the expense of others, and then it was not good. Labor and scholarship were one and indivisible, and had never been really divided—in fact, the majority of the world's greatest scholars were men of humble origin. The Workers' Educational Association was non-sectarian in matters of religion, non-partisan in matters of politics, and democratic in its forms of government, and had been in existence for 10 years. To-day there were 159 branches of the organization in England, and it had been found necessary to form district committees, which were federated with the national association. He wanted the workers of Australia to unite with their English brethren in the work. (Applause.) In England 5000 members were attending university tutorial classes and 5000 were under educational influence. The figures were small but they were hopeful. (Hear, hear.) The association was not for educated men, but for working people who desired to reach out to something better. The English working women were now keen on education, and they constituted a strong force on the side of the association. The women were tired of the penny novelette and the paper which recorded what was not always the best side of life, and were stretching out their hands for something better.

The big problem of the association was the education of the rural workers. The farm laborer had thoughts and ideas of his own, but he had been left too much at the mercy of the village inn. In many English villages the public house was the only common institution for the laborers, and there they spent every

night. The association had established branches in the country districts and splendid progress was being made. Lectures were given on many subjects, including Australia—and they did not get the immigration officers to give them. (Hear, hear.) Working men and women were studying with some of the greatest scholars in the world, and it was grand to see them at work. In Australia the same desire for education existed among the working men and women, who were anxious to understand things and develop their brains. The Adelaide workers were as keen for education as anyone, and he felt sure that some plan of action would be arranged for their benefit. The future of Australia depended upon the beauty of the minds of the common folk, and unless those minds were developed the future of the Commonwealth would be far less glorious and far fuller of pain and sorrow than it would otherwise have been.

The chairman moved:—

That this meeting expresses its appreciation of the work performed by the Workers' Educational Association as outlined by Mr. Mansbridge, and urges the Trades and Labor Council to do all in its power to bring a similar association into being in South Australia.

The motion was seconded by Mr. Burgess, and carried by acclamation.

Professor Mitchell moved a vote of thanks to Mr. Mansbridge, and, in doing so said that the council and staff of the University were thoroughly in sympathy with the movement. The motion was seconded by the registrar of the School of Mines (Mr. Laybourne Smith), supported by Chief-Inspector Charlton and the leader of the Parliamentary Labor Party (Mr. Crawford Vaughan, M.P.), and carried.

In acknowledging the vote Mr. Mansbridge said that he was a trade unionist, and carried greetings from the English trade unions to the Australian workers.

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WORKERS' EDUCATIONAL ASSOCIATION.

An interesting address in connection with the Workers' Educational Association, England, was delivered at the Trades Hall on Friday evening by Mr. Albert Mansbridge, M.A., founder and General Secretary of the movement. Mr. T. Ryan (President of the Trades and Labour Council) presided over a large attendance. Mr. Mansbridge pointed out that education was not knowledge. It was that which helped men to rise physically, mentally, and spiritually to a higher sphere of things. The association which he represented was initiated on the principle that labour and scholarship were one and indivisible. Throughout Australia he had found the working people quite as keen on education as those in England. Unless the minds of the common folk were developed, the future of the Commonwealth would be far less glorious and far more full of pain and sorrow.

At the instance of Mr. Ryan, seconded by Mr. J. Burgess, the following motion was carried—"That this meeting expresses its appreciation of the work done by the association as outlined by Mr. Mansbridge, and urges the members of the Trades and Labour Council to bring a similar association into being in South Australia."