Education for some...

John A. La Nauze

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THE FUTURE OF EDUCATION

EDUCATION FOR SOME...

J. A. La Nauze

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THE AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL FOR EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH

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Note: One of the programmes for educational reconstruction recently published in England is called *Education for All*. This essay deals largely with the existing situation in Australia and is accordingly entitled *Education for Some*. . . .
THE FUTURE OF EDUCATION
No. 3

EDUCATION
FOR SOME...

BY

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AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL FOR EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH
1943
In the Commonwealth Year Book for 1941 the paragraph immediately preceding the chapter on Education is concerned with Radio Proficiency certificates. That immediately following deals with criminal statistics. Was it a happy chance which placed Australian education in a position intermediate between vocational training and crime?

In this country there is, of course, little public interest in education. Emotions are easily aroused on the question of religious education, but in the singular logical obscurity which surrounds the argument in public discussion, one thing is clear—it is much more concerned with religion than with education. Political parties, even those which claim to be parties of social reform, seem to have felt that education has small political value. Perhaps there are some signs of change. The discussions over the war-time scheme of assistance to university students seem to have made many people aware for the first time of the existence of universities. Others seem to have realized that for the majority of students a university education depended on the level of their parents' income, and even to have given some thought to the implications of this fact. There is a lot more thinking to be done, and it needs to be done now. To the inevitable comment it is sufficient to reply in
the words of the British Trades Union Congress Memorandum on Education: 'Some may ask whether in these days of immediate stress we can afford time to consider education after the war. The answer is that if we do not consider it now, and if we do not have our plans ready and the necessary legislation on the statute book when hostilities cease, educational reform may well find itself left far behind in the welter of urgent problems which will then beset us. It is vital that educational reform should be undertaken; it is no less vital that we should make ready now.'

In this pamphlet I am concerned with educational opportunity, and touch only incidentally on questions of general educational policy. These are discussed in other pamphlets in this series. I believe that we ought to broaden educational opportunity to the limit at all stages of educational life; but I wish to stress that as we do so we must simultaneously be changing, adapting and extending the type of education we provide. At present, except in the stage of primary schooling, only a small minority of young people have the opportunity of receiving the education which they need for the full realization of themselves and for their development as responsible members of a democratic community, to say nothing of training in various techniques to the level needed if we are to keep our place in an increasingly complex world. Even in primary schools, and for the minority who go on to higher education, the type of 'education' we provide is deficient in many ways. While
I leave the discussion of these matters to other writers, the consciousness of them is always behind my present argument. To anyone who knows our system, and not least to professional teachers, it would be a dismal prospect if an approach to general equality of opportunity meant that nearly everyone acquired what we at present offer from first to last as 'education.'

'Education opportunity' is an expression which may have different meanings. It will be best, before we attempt any precise definition, to look at the facts of the educational situation in Australia. Let us first see what proportion of Australians do in fact get one kind or another of the various types of education theoretically open to them, from kindergarten to university. Then let us see whether differences in this respect are evident among groups in the community. Not until we have done this can we usefully argue on questions of 'opportunity.'

A thorough discussion of this question would require the examination of a large variety of statistics about the six state educational systems of Australia. However, some of the necessary statistics are lacking, and even if they could be obtained, their detailed analysis would not be practicable in a pamphlet of the present kind. Nevertheless, it is possible to present a picture which, if lacking in detail, is reasonably accurate in its outlines. We may occasionally do some injustice to particular sections of the Australian educational system, but what we need are generalizations.

1. e.g., Western Australia has a free university.
Compulsory primary education

It has long been acknowledged that the operation of a modern democratic state requires that its citizens shall be able to read, write and perform (or at least be able to understand) elementary arithmetical operations. This much, at least, is necessary so that names on a ballot paper may be read, and the meaning grasped of an electoral majority. Hence the establishment in Australia of free, compulsory and (for more complicated reasons) secular education up to the age when it is presumed that these essential skills have been acquired. For those to whose parents the conditions 'free' and 'secular' are distasteful, attendance at other types of school is permitted.

In Australia the minimum amount of education necessary for citizenship is presumed to have been acquired at age 14, in all states except New South Wales, where the age is now 15.2 The Australian states can thus maintain with justice that they have not fallen behind the American states of Georgia, Louisiana, North Carolina, South Carolina and Texas. Up to age 14, then, Australian children not only have the opportunity to acquire education, but they are compelled to take advantage of this opportunity. There would be little further to say on the question of 'opportunity' if the 'education' which children have compulsorily to acquire were broadly of similar quality throughout the states and if this

2. Tasmania and South Australia have announced their intention to raise the school-leaving age at some time in the future.
quality were beyond reasonable criticism; but neither of these conditions in fact holds.

Secondary school education

When people professionally concerned with education use the term 'secondary schooling' they mean the schooling which comes after primary schooling in time, and they would define it in terms of the syllabus, or perhaps in terms of stages of the student's psychological development. A more common meaning of secondary is 'minor, comparatively unimportant.' Since secondary schooling is not compulsory in Australia it would seem that the latter meaning is accepted by the Australian community generally. It may be said that this is an unjustified conclusion, because it is open to any child to acquire secondary education. Most states maintain a system of free high schools and even provide scholarships for some of those who attend them. If a child's parents prefer a different type of secondary school, the state places no obstacle in their way provided they can pay fees.

A few figures may help us here. Take the total school population in the compulsory period and compare it with the estimated numbers of children between these ages in the chosen states. For the year 1938 we get these results:

3. Calculated from figures in Review of Education in Australia, 1939. Too much weight should not be given to the exactness of the figures, since 'state populations' can only be approximate in inter-censal years. For the present purpose—comparisons within each state—this does not affect the validity of the conclusions. The choice of states in the tables in the text is dictated by the availability of statistics, e.g., South Australia and Queensland are the only states which publish the age-grouping of both state and private schools by single years.
Now take the school populations between the end of the compulsory period and age 18, and compare them with the estimated numbers in the states between these ages (i.e., in 1938, from ages 14 to 18). We get:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>School population, 14-18, as percentage of total numbers, 14-18</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New South Wales</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Australia</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Australia</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note that these percentages refer to all schools, state and non-state together. They support the view that, whatever the reason, 'secondary' education in Australia is in fact secondary in the sense of 'comparatively unimportant.' But school populations aged 14-18 are misleading as an index of 'survivors' from primary schools because it is fairly general for children to stay on at school in the year in which they reach the minimum leaving age. Consider these figures:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR 1940</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queensland</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. In these comparisons students at senior technical schools are not included in 'school populations.'
Figures for single-year age-groups in all schools are not available for other states, but it seems likely that they would show similar results. The reader may, with advantage, glance at the column for ages 12-13, and then at that for ages 15-16.

We saw that for South Australia in 1938, for ages 14-18 the percentage at school was 23; if, however, we consider ages 15-18, this percentage drops to 14. It has sometimes been seriously maintained that Australia has the best educational system in the world. Whatever its merits, they have so far been of no concern to over 80 per cent. of Australian boys and girls after they have turned 15.

University Education

In 1939, the last year unaffected by the war, there were slightly over 14,000 students enrolled in Australian universities. In the same year there were 133,000 persons between the ages of 16 and 21 years and a further 32,000 under 16 years employed in factories; 10,354 university students were enrolled in degree courses, and this figure substantially represents the number who were receiving any adequate sort of 'education.' It is about 1 per cent. of the total school population in 1939, excluding technical schools. The view that only 1 per cent. of children are fitted for university education cannot be accepted; an estimate, supplied by Dr. Cunningham and based upon the distribution of intelligence quotients, suggests that the figure would be about 10 per cent. or over. Even with the widest allowance
for error this figure indicates how large the proportionate increase in university populations would be if the majority of those whose intelligence fits them for university education did in fact receive it. Yet the true position was worse than this figure indicates, for the universities in the past have been very far from getting even the best 1 per cent. Any university teacher knows many university students who should long before have been diverted to other types of education, and many people outside the university who should be inside. We shall see some evidence on this subject presently.  

**Technical and Adult Education**

It is not my intention to discuss technical or adult education. While technical education is emphatically not a subject to be considered apart from general educational policy, it has many special problems of its own which need detailed and expert treatment. In 1939 the individual students enrolled in the technical schools of the six states numbered about 90,000. This may look impressive—and indeed, from some points of view it is—but it should be realized that the vast majority of these students was receiving solely vocational training, from tinsmithing to hairdressing. The training of skilled workers is an essential part of the educational system, but at present there is not much education about it. It is

5. I do not discuss the recent Commonwealth scheme of assistance to university students and the establishment of the Universities Commission which will probably be considered at length in a later pamphlet in this series. The scheme is a war-time creation with no guarantee of continued existence when Commonwealth powers lapse after the war. Begun ostensibly to provide technical personnel for the purposes of war, it is potentially the first step towards an Australian educational policy of which we need not be ashamed.
EDUCATION FOR SOME...

nearly all on a part-time basis, and the attitude of most industrial concerns towards 'time off' for technical education during working hours is lukewarm or hostile.

What has been done in adult education with inadequate funds, and in the face of coldness and even hostility from the people and institutions who ought to be its strongest supporters, is a tribute to the patience and spirit of some of those who direct it. But they would be the first to say that the work of adult education has barely begun in Australia.

Differential opportunity

So far our discussion has been in general terms, making no distinctions between different types of schools. But we cannot discuss educational opportunity without making this distinction.

For two states, South Australia and Victoria, detailed comparisons have recently been made of the different educational opportunities of students in state and non-state ('private') schools. The general conclusions of these two studies are very similar. The South Australian survey was confined to boys. It was shown that up to age 14, the state school population was nearly 90 per cent. of the total school population. Beyond that age the relative loss of students was progressively heavier in the state schools and figures showed that 'at each stage in the progress

6. The term 'private school' has various meanings. Throughout this discussion it stands for all types of non-state school. The studies referred to are Some Aspects of Educational Opportunity in South Australia,' by J. A. La Nauze (in Australian Educational Studies, Second Series, Australian Council for Educational Research, 1940), and What Chance Has Your Child?, by N. K. Henderson, Melbourne, 1942.
towards higher education (and generally speaking, higher incomes) the state schools play a smaller part than the private schools.' When it came to university education the figures revealed a position which in principle might have been expected by those who have no illusions about the differential nature of educational opportunity in Australia, but which in degree was rather surprising. For an eleven-year period (1927-37) 39 per cent. of all university graduates came from state schools and 61 per cent. from non-state schools. In Medicine 86 per cent. of graduates came from non-state schools, in Dentistry 71 per cent., in Law 78 per cent., in Engineering 55 per cent., in Arts (honours degree) 86 per cent., in Science (honours degree) 69 per cent. Only in Arts and Science pass degrees was there a majority of graduates from state schools, and it was clear that this was accounted for by the graduation of Education Department teachers who paid no university fees. The position was summarized in these words: 'We have seen how boys from state schools, despite their great numerical superiority in the early years of life, play a progressively smaller part at each stage of progress towards higher education and higher incomes. We have seen how quickly their numbers fall off in each year beyond the minimum school-leaving age; how graduates from state schools are a minority in all the faculties of the university except those which lead to school-teaching; how, even in Arts and Science, the state schools have a negligible share in the best education these faculties
can offer, i.e., the course for honours degrees.' It was argued that the confident generalization could be made that the private schools, taken as a group, represented higher incomes than the state schools, and that the differences revealed in educational opportunity could be ascribed primarily to differences in the income-levels of parents.

Mr. Henderson's study, which deals with both boys and girls, shows that the position in Victoria is much the same as in South Australia. He shows that 'in spite of the fact that more than 75 per cent. of all Victorian school children belong to the state schools, only 24 per cent. of those entering the professions each year (by way of university graduation) come from these schools.' His figures for graduates of the University of Melbourne for 1939 show that in all faculties a majority of graduates came from private schools—in the cases of Medicine, Law and Engineering the proportions were 91, 70 and 60 per cent. respectively.

For New South Wales further information on this question of differential opportunity is available as the result of a careful investigation by Mr. J. S. Collings into the quality of students entering the university, as judged by performances in the School Leaving Certificate examination. His summary of the detailed results showed that:

(1) Only a small percentage of the best available students was entering the university.

(2) This was due very largely to the poor
economic circumstances of the majority of the students.

(3) Those students who obtained by competition what little financial assistance was available were by far the best students during their university courses.

(4) By far the biggest percentage of the best students as judged by Leaving examination results came from state schools and were of relatively poor means.

(5) Since assistance available was wholly inadequate to allow the good students whose parents had low incomes to come to the university, their place was being taken by inferior students who could afford to pay their way.

Mr. Collings' conclusions contain no implication that the Leaving examination is the best conceivable, or the only possible, test of 'quality' in a student; but it is clearly a better test than the largely irrelevant circumstance of parental income, which has been a major factor in deciding university entrance, provided the very elementary requirement of a bare pass in matriculation had been satisfied.

Perhaps the most revealing of his figures are those which refer to rejected applications for university exhibitions. There are 200 exhibitions per year, which entitle holders to a remission of university fees. In the years 1939-41 inclusive, 899 applications for exhibitions were rejected, the basis of award being
the students' marks in the Leaving examination. The vast majority of those who failed to gain an exhibition were 'good' students, i.e., they gained at least 400 marks in the aggregate in the Leaving. The possible maximum was approximately 900 marks, while the minimum aggregate which would gain a pass was approximately 170 marks. Their application for exhibitions may be taken as evidence of their desire to attend the university if they could get remission of fees. Mr. Collings' figures show their fate.

Where the family income was less than £400 per annum, 23 per cent. of rejected applicants enrolled in three-year courses (the majority on Teachers' College scholarships, binding them to be teachers after graduation); 17 per cent. enrolled in courses requiring more than three years; 60 per cent. did not enrol. Where the family income was greater than £400 per annum, 25 per cent. of rejected applicants enrolled in three-year courses, 35 per cent. in courses requiring more than three years, and 40 per cent. did not enrol. Many of this last group returned to school and repeated the Leaving certificate in the hope of obtaining an exhibition in the following year.

The majority of these rejected applicants for exhibitions were better students (as judged by the Leaving examination) than several hundreds of students who were able to go on to the university without exhibitions. Most of them who went on, and whose family incomes were less than £400, did so only by putting themselves under bond to teach after they had graduated.
The creation of opportunities

We have seen that the great majority of the Australian people have finished with education about the age of 14 and that among the minority who proceed further there is evidently considerable inequality of opportunity at successive stages. In the remaining pages of this pamphlet I shall consider some of the main steps to be taken if this state of affairs is to be changed for what I consider to be 'the better.' There is a lot of talk about 'reconstruction,' which should really be concerned with 'construction.' There are some things which are 'wrong' about our educational system in Australia and which ought to be reconstructed; there are many more things which we need to construct from the beginning because they have never existed here. One of these is a comprehensive scheme for the realization of full educational opportunity. In the notable report on post-war planning recently issued by the National Resources Planning Board in the United States it is postulated that 'the goal for our educational efforts must be the provision of training for every child and youth, the kind best adapted to his abilities and in the amount calculated to develop his maximum usefulness to himself, his community and society.' I take this as substantially the aim we must set out to achieve, though I would prefer to substitute the general word 'education' for 'training,' which in some people's minds seems to be associated exclusively with the acquiring of technical skills.

There are two words in the phrase 'educational
opportunity.' In constructing an educational system education comes first, and it is not a single nor a simple thing. Changes must be made in the type and quality of education, from kindergarten to adult education. It is essential that reconstruction and construction should be proceeding over the whole range of our educational system if the 'best' or even something comparatively 'good' is to be available to those for whom opportunities are created.

In what follows I am ignoring administrative difficulties which might arise from the fact that the control of educational systems is a matter for the states. While I recognize the disadvantages which have in some ways arisen from centralized control, even in the case of single states, I assume that a reformed educational policy cannot allow any part of Australia to fall behind. Co-operation between states and Commonwealth in maintaining standards while allowing for the local diversity essential to experiments in education is obviously necessary. It is difficult to see any genuine difficulties in the way of devising it.

I proceed to the question of opportunity. Now it is true that, strictly, educational opportunity can never be absolutely equal in the sense that everyone has the opportunity to acquire, according to his tastes and abilities, an education of the same quality as all others of similar tastes and abilities. For example, one teacher of genius in school or university is sufficient to change a course of instruction formally the same as courses in other institutions into a unique
experience which cannot be shared by students in other places. 'Inequalities' of this kind can hardly be avoided and it would perhaps be a poorer world if they could be. When we have taken the steps which I now suggest it may be time to contemplate the unfortunate rarity of genius.

(1) All parents should be able to anticipate that their children will have education of the kind for which they are fitted to the limit to which its provision extends. I assume that all children not mentally retarded\(^7\) are fitted for education to a higher stage than that to which most of them proceed at present. This involves the raising of the minimum school age throughout Australia—a step long advocated by teachers, and approved in principle by several Governments in recent years. But it is a step that must be taken, not merely talked about; and the minimum leaving age must be at least 16 years, and perhaps ultimately higher. The appropriate changes in the type of education offered must be made; it would be a calamity if the only education available were that dominated by the syllabus of the Leaving Examination.

Scholarships in their present form must be abolished. There can be little objection to special awards such as prizes and medals to outstanding students, though these can be overdone and too highly regarded, especially in the earlier years of education. But the existence of a system in which the winning

\(^7\) Mentally retarded children, of course, need more and better, if not higher, education.
of a scholarship or bursary makes the difference between getting education or not, is evidence in itself of inequality of educational opportunity. The scholarship system should give place to one in which all suitable students for the various types of higher educational institutions would be on the same footing and paid adequate living allowances. Obviously this will involve some test of 'suitability,' e.g., for university education by examination, intelligence and aptitude tests and otherwise. There may still be some injustice done to those narrowly excluded by such a test, but it will be as nothing compared with the system we have developed, and with a proper general educational policy there will be other means of minimizing or adjusting it. We have seen an example of the working of the scholarship system in the case of university education in New South Wales. If a boy from a poor family won an exhibition or bursary he would probably go to the university; if he just failed to win one he would not, while boys of much lower intellectual calibre could freely enter the university if their parents could afford to maintain them during their courses.

We are led to a view of studentship as a profession. The community needs and should be prepared to pay for the education of its citizens—and note that university education is but one of a number of types of higher education we need. Our present system fails from two sides. Scholarships exist as favours,  

8. A means test may possibly be desirable; but it should be a comparatively high one. 'Higher' education may take a number of forms besides university education.
and the governments which grant them do not regard them as investments. On the other hand few students have a sense of community responsibility.

The abolition of scholarships—or what comes to the same thing, the provision of scholarships for all who are fitted to enter the various types of educational institutions, need not be a discouragement to private donors like those who in the past have acted generously to supply the deficiencies of our system. There will always be a large number of extra educational needs to be met even when the general level of equipment, facilities and opportunity can be regarded as good.

The opening in this way of opportunities at all stages of educational life would do much to abolish the present differential advantages in favour of students from non-state schools, which largely rest on differences of family income, though it would not entirely eliminate them. What then should be the place of private schools in a reconstructed educational system?

This question raises many issues which extend beyond the limits of my subject and indeed beyond the limits of discussion on education. I confine myself as far as possible to aspects of the existing private school system which may be properly discussed in relation to educational opportunity.

Whatever may be the nominal basis for their existence—and in nearly all cases it is denominational—there are in fact two kinds of private school in Australia. There are first the schools which have
as the effective basis of their continued existence the
desire of parents in higher income groups to give
their children an education apart from that of the
state schools. In fact, if not in intention, they reflect
and increase social distinctions based in the main on
income. Most of them are denominational, but it
seems not unfair to say that the denominational basis
serves mainly to decide which schools various children
shall attend; for most parents (not, of course, all)
the religious-denominational aspect of the school is
secondary to the type of school and its social status.

Secondly, there are the private schools, of which
the Roman Catholic schools form the overwhelming
majority, which exist not primarily to provide educa-
tion apart from that of state schools, but different,
in what they conceive to be important ways. Their
separate existence is a reflection of differences, not in
social groupings but in mental attitudes. This dis-
tinction may be criticized on formal grounds. No
school would describe itself in its prospectus as
belonging to the first group; and of course no such
distinction can be completely valid. Nevertheless, I
think the distinction is substantially true in practice.9

What can be said about these types of school
within the limits of our present subject? Consider
the first group. We have seen that pupils of the
private schools have in the past had much better
educational opportunities than pupils of state schools;
but this is clearly a reflection of income-groupings,
not of different qualities of schooling. Mr. Collings'
figures show this beyond doubt, though it is hard to conceive of any doubts about the general explanation. Inequality of opportunity arising from this cause would be considerably lessened by the system of free education at all stages combined with living allowances which I have mentioned before. It would not be entirely eliminated. A comfortable room in which to work at home, as contrasted with a corner of a room used by others, constitutes in itself a differential advantage for the boy or girl fortunate enough to enjoy it; but this type of differential advantage is not one which can be much affected by educational policy alone.

There are other aspects of opportunity not directly related to income-levels. Attendance at the ‘right’ schools does no doubt in itself remove some obstacles, although on this matter English parallels should not be pressed too far. The Australian schools are less like the English ‘public’ schools than people outside them, and even people inside them, imagine. Whatever may be the case after the war, a ‘public school’ has been an almost essential preliminary, in practice, to many types of career in England. In Australia, while the old school tie legend is not entirely a joke, there are no obvious differences of speech and habits to distinguish the products of state and non-state secondary schools, and entry into the civil services has in fact been weighted in favour of those who have had a minimum of schooling.

There is, further, the question of the quality of education. Do parents, apart from other considera-
tions, buy for their children a better education at most private schools than could be got at a state school? If there are any notable differences in favour of the private schools these will constitute inequality of educational opportunity, and a criticism of the state-school systems.

It would be absurd to try to give any short answer to this question. We can say fairly confidently that the general standard of formal instruction is higher in state schools, while at a number of the big private schools, the brightest pupils are likely to have a type of education in their later years which allows them to develop in a freer and more interesting way than most of their contemporaries in state schools. It is certain that there are some valuable things in the educational methods of some private schools which the state schools lack; it is also certain that in many, even in those which may be making interesting experiments in some departments, there is a good deal of incompetent teaching. In general—there are exceptions—the physical environment of the first group of private schools is far superior to that of most state schools. Lawns and gardens and fine buildings, trees and open spaces do much in a subtle way to increase the value of education. Sometimes in private schools these things have been acquired at the expense of equipment; and most private school teachers would prefer increases of salary to new swimming pools or sports pavilions. Nevertheless, in themselves they comprise an advantage in 'educational' opportunity. A parent strongly believing in the principle of the
common school might yet reluctantly send his child to a private school after contemplating the average suburban state school, with its dreary asphalt yard and its hideous brick buildings. In most places educational environment is as much in need of reform as educational content.

Of the English public schools a group of eminent scientists recently wrote: 'The system is socially injurious since it divorces a section of the people from the rest, from the life of the main part of the community, especially from all those engaged in the productive processes and manual and technical labour. . . . It is true that some public (i.e., private in our sense) schools possess, at present, advantages from a technical-pedagogical point of view over State-aided secondary schools. . . . Let us see their educational methods, their organization and their personnel applied to the service of a wider community than the wealthy.'¹⁰ These words do not quite accurately describe the position in Australia of the first group of private schools. The 'wealthy' whose children go to them are for the most part people on fairly moderate incomes; but that they foster and reflect social distinctions (not necessarily intentionally) is undeniable. Perhaps paradoxically, that follows from the existence of democratic institutions. An acute observer writes on this question: 'We have democratic political forms. But whatever may be the aspirations of democrats in the direction of economic equality, it has certainly not yet been

attained in any democracy that I know. We have not attained it, or anything like it. There is, in Australia, a considerable amount of inequality. On this, quite definitely, our social classes are based. This being so, people above a certain income grade demand the provision of schools of this type in Australia. He adds that if you were to wipe out these schools to-morrow, you would find people setting to work to build up something very like them the day after to-morrow.

The future of private schools is indeed only partly a question of educational policy; it is bound up with the political and social future. The positive programme for those who find the position of these schools anomalous in a democracy can be simply stated. Standards throughout state education must be raised to the level where expensive schools are not worth while in their present form and become assimilated to the general system. Some at least of the private school headmasters, and perhaps more of the assistant masters, would not view such a programme entirely with misgiving.

For some private schools on the fringes of the first group there is not much to be said. These are the small schools, both 'preparatory' and secondary, ill-equipped and poorly staffed, which offer a cheap 'college' education. Strict enforcement of proper


12. Since we are concerned with education there is no need to pursue the interesting thesis that 'two great tools developed by the boarding schools to produce Christian gentlemen and responsible citizens were the prefect system and organized games.' (Reported in Sydney Morning Herald, January 23, 1943.)
standards in instruction and in the qualifications and salaries of teachers would probably make their continued existence impossible. The desire of parents on modest incomes to give their children a 'college education'\(^{13}\) often results in their getting education of small value without any substantial compensation in social prestige.

The general question of religion in education is outside my subject. The discussion about religion in education will go on, and while it is true that it raises some fundamental issues of principle, it is not necessary that it be settled before educational reconstruction can proceed. Its settlement implies that the parties to the discussion use a common logical process, so that conclusions can be accepted by both. They have not even begun to do that.

(3) Opportunities must be made more equal between town and country. Where students from the country come to towns for higher education (e.g., the university), living allowances must be sufficiently large adequately to cover the extra costs of living away from home. The establishment of residential hostels for country students should be officially undertaken. In the country itself it may be the case that rather than spreading secondary schools too widely, similar policy involving residence in central towns

\(^{13}\) 'College. The indiscriminate assumption of the name by schools that are no more colleges than others contented with the ordinary title is a sad degradation and obscuring of the word's meaning. Mothers (not yet, perhaps, fathers) are now heard to speak of sending their boys to college when they mean merely to school; this at least should be resisted; it is too late to ask the self-styled "colleges" to consider whether it is for their real dignity to use college in the same way as our grandfathers are laughed at for using academy.' Fowler, *Modern English Usage*. The misuse of the word is not confined to small schools.
would give better educational results at no greater, or even less, cost.

The spreading of schools over the sparsely-populated country areas of Australia is an impressive tribute to the men and women of the nineteenth century who began the policy. It is time, however, that justified pride in maps showing the distribution of the little schools of the outback was mixed with some reflections on the quality of the education which it is possible to provide in most of them. The one-teacher, ten-pupil school affords many an example of unselfish devotion to a profession. But in the world of to-day, have modern methods of transport no relation to the problem of the isolated school?

For those country-dwellers who wish to pursue their education beyond the stage of formal instruction there are few or no facilities available. In some country towns the pathetic ghosts exist of what were, perhaps forty years ago, comparatively well-stocked libraries. Some years ago the Munn-Pitt report gave a picture of libraries in Australia which was comic—or tragic. The position remains unchanged.

It is sufficient to say that the problem of opportunity for country children is one of distance, of manpower shortage on farms, of the absence of books and libraries, of the standards of rural life—in short, a complicated problem, and one which varies from state to state. In comparison with other educational problems it has received far too little attention; this state of affairs should be changed.

(4) Technical education lies outside the limits
set for this pamphlet. It needs reorganization as extensive as that needed in other branches of education. It should be made an integral part of general education. It should no longer be, as it is largely at present, a hard struggle for weary youths in night classes. The educational class distinction between technical school and university should go, and there is much to be said for replacing the existing duplication of engineering and other courses by a division of functions between the two institutions.

**Conclusion**

I conclude with a number of assertions.

1. General educational opportunity in Australia is grossly inadequate.
2. As between different groups in the community, educational opportunity has been markedly unequal.
3. Most Australians rest in a state of ignorant complacency about these matters. Ignorant complacency about education is incompatible with 'reconstruction.'
4. The school-leaving age should be raised to at least 16, and facilities for various types of higher education widely extended.
5. Education at all stages should be free and accompanied by living allowances for students in the higher stages.
6. Not everybody is fitted for the same kind of education; but the test of suitability should not be parental income.
(7) Inequality of educational opportunity between town and country students should be corrected.

It is clear that reform in education, as elsewhere, cannot be made at one jump. It must proceed partly by adaptation and grafting, partly by addition. It will take time. There is much that may have to wait during the war, most notably the construction of buildings. But it is vital to plan ahead. For example, the raising of the school-age in itself needs an extensive addition to school staffs, to say nothing of new buildings. We should proceed to plan in a comprehensive way, realizing that continual modifications may be necessary with changed circumstances and new knowledge. And we should not be frightened of beginning small things because we know that what we want to make ultimately and perhaps after years will be a big thing.

You can bring a horse to water but you cannot make it drink. I have left it to others to discuss the range and quality of education we need, but I have assumed that the range must be greatly extended and the quality improved. With this assumption, I have contended that we must make freely and generally available the opportunity to experience education. But I have neglected the desire for education. Unless this generally exists the rest is largely purposeless. To create it is as much a task for educators as the framing of plans for educational reform—indeed, it is a major part of such planning. People must be 'made to understand how much the
“new order” depends on fundamental changes in our ideas and ways of thought. These changes mean education, and the dependence is twofold. First, it is a matter of expediency, not only of ‘practical use’ but of practical necessity in the modern world. Expediency is always an argument which impresses Australians. Secondly, it is a matter of what a ‘new order’ is for. The answer is not, of course, education in itself, but it is something—a kind of living—which can only be based on education. ‘Who would suppose that education were a thing which had to be advocated on the ground of local expediency or indeed on any ground? As if it stood not on the basis of everlasting duty, as a prime necessity of man!’
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