

## EDUCATION DEPARTMENT.

### NEW HEADQUARTERS.

#### FOUNDATION STONE LAID.

BYDNEY, Sunday.

The foundation stone of the new building for the Department of Public Instruction, which is to be erected on the site of the old building in Bridge-street, was laid yesterday by Mr. Carmichael, the Minister for Public Instruction.

In introducing the Minister, Mr. P. H. Board, the Under-secretary, said that the department had waited a good many years for the building that was now rising. It had been housed for nearly 20 years in the old place, which possessed great historical associations, but unfortunately something more than that was required to make it suitable for the purpose of the department, and he was extremely glad to know that the time was approaching when they could occupy a building not only suitable, but more in accordance with the value this State placed upon its public education.

The Minister, after declaring the stone "well and truly laid," outlined the history of education in the State from its inception, and that of the building that is to be replaced by the new structure. Tracing the gradual development up to its latest phase, the Minister said early in 1880 Sir Henry Parkes, who was then Premier, passed through Parliament the present Education Act. In 1881 there were 1498 schools, whereas in 1911 the number was 3125, an increase of 1627. In the first-named year there were 2558 teachers, whereas last year the number had increased to 5849. In the year after the Act was passed, the number of children enrolled was 146,106, and the expenditure was £474,167. Last year the enrolment totalled 246,532, and the expenditure £1,276,338.

"Here was established our system of primary education, and as it flourished the administrative office," the Minister said, "became quite inadequate to house the staff. The staff was scattered here and there, and its efficiency sadly discounted. Now and up-to-date accommodation became essential to meet not only the growing expansion of the primary schools, but these other great branches of education it has been our good fortune to establish. These greatly expanded offices will be the centre of a greatly expanded system of education, and the foundation of the office we lay to-day synchronises very happily with the foundation this year of a much wider and complete system of national education. We have established a great system of continuation and trade education, every bit as important to the general, and especially the industrial, population as our system of primary education, and we have established a system of free secondary education to meet the demands of the State in another direction. As we co-ordinate in this great new building the whole of the scattered branches of the administration staff, and make it an effective weapon for administrative work, so we have had the pleasure and good fortune to see co-ordinated the fragmentary sections of our educational system into one complete and harmonious whole. A system has been laid down and will be completed as soon as the proposed Amending University Bill is passed that will allow opportunity for complete education to every child in the State—the primary education will be registered and made truly compulsory, to the whole of the children of the State, absolutely without any restriction—there will be offered the opportunity of free secondary education, trade or professional, and to the whole of that secondary intelligence the order-

trade or professional, and to the whole of that secondary intelligence the opportunity of free University education independent of wealth or position—dependent only on what I consider should be the foundation of a national education, intelligence and the perseverance necessary to imply that intelligence. We have here representatives of the professional and industrial world, and if we receive their co-operation with that of the parents the splendid teaching of the department will assure that an educational structure will arise worthy of the foundations that have been laid and worthy of the great mother State and her traditions."

Mr. H. Y. Bradten said that as a business man he desired to congratulate the department on the teaching of commercial subjects at the continuation schools. This system was a credit to the Government, to the community, and to the whole of New South Wales.

Mr. T. Miller also tendered congratulations. He was hopeful and confident that New South Wales would build up an education system not surpassed in any civilized country.

Mr. H. E. Prattin regarded the subject of education as outside the arena of party politics. If he were in authority he would make it necessary, if possible, for all teachers to have developed to some extent the basis of philosophical sciences, because otherwise teachers could never do the best for the young idea. As the representative of the manufacturers, he held out the right hand of friendship to the department to help in the solution of what to do with our boys. It was the desire of all that the future of the boys should be closely considered, and his chamber would try to help.

Later, in the Minister's room, Sir Norman Maclestin proposed success to the Department of Education. There was no doubt, he said, that all were united as to education. There was a solidarity in it and a general appreciation of the importance of it which must appeal to everyone. He paid a tribute to Mr. Board, whose whole life, he said, had been devoted to the business of education.

Judge Hackhouse, in supporting, remarked that there was never greater harmony between the University and the Department than at the present time. Never had the function of the University been recognised to the same extent as by the present Ministry, and particularly by the present Minister (Mr. Carmichael). Personally, he thought the greater part of the work of the department was being done in the country. Throughout the State the education of the young was being thoroughly attended to.

The Minister expressed his thanks, and added that he had nothing but praise for the whole of the staff in the department, and of the staff of 6000 teachers throughout the State.

Mr. Board regarded the relations between the University and the department as becoming more and more helpful to the department. Valuable assistance was being rendered the department in connection with a very important part of its policy, primary and secondary education, and he felt certain that as time went on these two great institutions would become more and more helpful to each other. The time had gone by when the work of instruction comprised merely teaching the "three R's"; the time had come when it was not literacy that provided the danger, but an elementary knowledge which was so insufficient that it carried with it neither skill nor ability.