

MOTHER TONGUE AND OTHER TONGUE.*

My subject this morning is "Mother Tongue and Other Tongue." This title, though not a new one, best expresses the nature of the subject-matter with which I shall deal, for apart from its Introduction, my paper divides itself naturally into two parts. In the first part, "Mother Tongue," I shall consider various arguments advanced by leading educationists on language as the best expression of the culture of a people and on the necessity of home language medium in schools. In the second part of my paper I shall make some suggestions for the improvement of second language teaching in the single-medium school.

Home language medium is an educational question; it always was, it is today, and it always will be. Let us, therefore, try to see it as such. To do so we must study the views neither of politicians nor of members of the public, but of educationists. Nor should we confine ourselves to the views of any one educationist in any one bilingual country in which such investigations have been conducted; rather should we make ourselves familiar with the findings of eminent authorities who have studied the problem in various countries of the world.

- * A slightly abridged version of a paper read at the Annual Congress of Die Saamwerkunie van Natal in Durban, 4th September, 1954, by Professor R. E. Davies, head of the Department of English in the Potchefstroom University for C.H.E.

Now for my educational authorities. This part of my task is the most difficult: to attempt within the limits of a paper such as this a consideration, however brief, of the findings of some of the chief authorities on bilingualism. All I can do here is to say who they are, what their books are called, when they were published, and who published them, and to quote relevant passages from them. The rest, if you are interested, you will have to do for yourselves: read the books. Lest it be thought that I have wrenched my quotations out of their context to suit a particular point of view, I may say that the books in question, with the exception of one, which is more guarded, are unequivocally in favour of home language medium and all that it implies.

The first book to which I would like to draw your attention is "Bilingualism (with special reference to Bengal)", by Michael West. This was published in 1926 by the Bureau of Education, India, and has become a standard work on bilingualism. Exhaustive in its experiments and emphatic in its findings, it consists of three parts: a discussion of various aspects of bilingualism, e.g. bilingualism and national culture; reports of various experiments in English reading carried out on Bengali pupils and students; and a number of appendices concerned mainly with the results of such experiments and tests.

Of nationality Mr. West says: "Nationality is 'etymologically an ethnical but more accurately a cultural concept'. It is based on a 'consciousness of kind' which may be illusory but is not less effective for that; it has relation to a definite home country. . . Group life and National life are a matter of 'sentiment', rather than of reason. The special function of the first language, the mother-tongue, in reference to the preservation of national life is its Evocative function; it is the form of expression which is, for its own people, most intimately bound up with the emotional life. This function cannot be performed by any Second Language: no second language possesses the Evocative values of a mother-tongue. Hence the culture of no second language has power to displace the culture of the mother-tongue."

He goes on to quote Professor Zimmern ("Sociological Review", 1912):—"You cannot make a Jew or an Italian or a Pole into an inheritor of Puritan or Virginian culture by waving a flag before his eyes. But what you can do is to kill in him what was the best thing he brought across the Atlantic, far more precious than the bundle he guarded so carefully in the steerage,—his own little special inheritance."

Mr. West continues:—"If in these circumstances (the alien in the United States of America) renationalisation is impossible, it is far more impossible where the culture is imported into the midst of an existing civilization and the language of the new culture is required to replace a mother-tongue current in its own natural environment. It is inconceivable that this should succeed: it is the policy of no sane educationist or missionary"

My quotations, as you will doubtless have noticed, are on the long side. This I have done so as to reveal, as far as possible, a continuity of argument.

Mr. West also states:—"There is certainly no advantage in being born in a bilingual country but rather a disadvantage. The disadvantage lies not so much in being bilingual as in possessing one of the minor languages as one's mother-tongue. . . . Other disadvantages are inherent rather in the use of the foreign medium than in Bilingualism. It is not considered a disadvantage for an English boy to have to learn French at a secondary school, but it would be considered a disadvantage if he were compelled to listen to lessons and answer his teacher in French in all the subjects of the curriculum. The Foreign medium is not a necessary part of the bilingualism; on the contrary it is both unnecessary and actually undesirable even for the purpose for which it has been advocated (namely improvement of foreign speech and writing ability.)"

Elsewhere he says: "Not only is the employment of the foreign medium in oral class-work useless for the purpose for which it is intended, but it is actually detrimental in other respects. O'Shea ("Linguistic Development and Education", 1907) reminds us that by making a child speak in an unfamiliar language we set him back to the stage of infancy."

Mr. West qualifies all this by saying that "in the case of the foreign medium in the language of the textbook the position is different. No actual disadvantages arise from this in respect of production of inaccuracy of diction, 'parrot learning', etc. . . . In short if a child's education is bilingual in its Receptive aspect but unilingual in its Expressive aspect, Bilingualism is not necessarily a handicap."

One more quotation from Mr. West:—"(There is a) confusion in thought between bilingualism, and what is by no means a necessary although it is a very frequent concomitant of bilingualism—the foreign medium of instruction. It is obviously possible to maintain that the Bengali should be bilingual, but yet that the spoken foreign medium of

instruction should nowhere be used. The boy would be taught in Bengali (though some of his textbooks might even be English); and he would answer his examination papers in Bengali. This would not mean that he would be unable to speak or to write English, but that the writing and speaking of English would be treated as a separate subject."

I think no more need be said about the definite point of view taken by Mr. West on the question of home language both as medium and as the expression of the culture of a people. His experiments, which have special reference to reading ability, bear out his views as stated above.

The next work to which I shall draw your attention is "The Bilingual Problem: a Study based upon Experiments and Observations in Wales", by D. J. Saer, Frank Smith, and John Hughes. It is interesting to recall that the last-named, John Hughes, was for three years Professor of Education at Rhodes University College, Grahamstown, before he went to Canada as Professor of Education at McGill.

This study was published in 1924 for the University College of Wales, Aberystwyth, by Hughes and Son, Wrexham. It consists of sections on various aspects of the subject, such as development of language capacity in the child, investigations into the possible effects of bilingualism, the difficulties of experiment, and suggestions for a new treatment. The three investigators present evidence for the possibility of retardation through bilingual interference.

On Nationality they state:—"The monoglot English-speaking child of Welsh parentage may fall, as it were, between two stools. Being Welsh by blood he cannot identify himself intimately (even were such a course educationally desirable) with English pride of race and national sentiment. . . . The loss of contact with the national spiritual inheritance of the past is followed by a tendency towards moral and spiritual deterioration."

Of mother tongue education Saer, Smith, and Hughes say: "By using his mother tongue consistently in connection with his activities at home, on the playground and at school, the intellectual and emotional sides of the young child's life are united in a consistent whole; his language becomes an efficient instrument of expression and of understanding, his interest in language as an essential instrument is increased, his appreciation of literary worth and the beauty of literature becomes more effective, and thus he can derive fuller benefit from the humanising influence that literature bestows The child learns to speak before he begins to attend school, and the main features of his language are determined by

out-of-school influences. The teacher can modify the superstructure, but the foundations are laid by others. The language learnt before five years of age, and the power thereby gained of adjusting the mind impressively and expressively to the environment, is a rock upon which thereafter all conscious thought is erected as a superstructure. . . . The life and atmosphere of the secondary school should blend harmoniously with the best of what is typical in Welsh life and culture. . . . Why not boldly face the fact that the Welsh schools, with the language difficulty, cannot correspond closely to the English schools?"

They conclude:—"We are convinced that children should, from the beginning, be taught at school by means of their mother tongue, that they should continue to use it, be introduced to its printed symbols, and read and write exclusively in that language until they have attained such a mastery of it that the second language can be introduced without risk of mental confusion."

I cannot leave the work of Sear, Smith and Hughes without quoting also their views on the vexed question of parental option: "In bilingual countries it is not an uncommon experience that educationists have to save the indigenous child from his parents. Such instances have come to our notice more than once. In Belgium, Government Inspector Wanderwollen—a man having 'no interest in the Flemish language *qua* language'—holds that 'teaching had suffered through the displacing of the mother tongue by French, even though it had been done with the consent and at the request of parents who recognised the social and commercial value of the French language.' . . . The exclusion of Welsh from the schools of the Principality in the nineteenth century is a further instance of this tendency. There is thus a problem to be faced in the case of the Welsh parent which calls for wise and bold treatment. . . . To make the parent the sole judge in the matter may lead to short-sighted decisions. The increased participation of the parent in our educational system is one of the crying needs of our time. The only solution is to convince him by facts and arguments that we are unanswerable." So much for "The Bilingual Problem" of Sear, Smith and Hughes.

Earlier Welsh contributions to the bilingual problem were comparative and statistical. Here I may instance T. R. Dawes' "Bilingual Teaching in Belgian Schools," published by the Cambridge University Press in 1902. This surveys typical school problems in Belgium. In 1915 James G. Williams published "Mother Tongue and Other Tongue" (Jarvis and Foster, Bangor). This reviews Belgian conditions more fully than does

the work of Dawes, and applies the comparison to Welsh conditions in some detail. But neither affords any satisfactory evidence as to the educational results of bilingualism. I would, however, like to quote the following from Williams.

Of single-medium he writes: "Bitter experience has in times past supported the canons of teaching method in the view that there can be no real development when the child is cut off from the institutions of his environment by denying him the use of his own language in school." And of dual-medium: "The promiscuous use of English and Welsh in teaching a lesson is educationally unsound and must be avoided." And of parental option: "The mere word of the parent is not enough to go on whenever the power to choose the initial medium is possible within the school itself. The disastrous results of the plebiscite of parents in Brussels point the moral. The act of decision is no light one, and should be undertaken by the Head-teacher, whose commonsense and fidelity to what is of strictly educational value should guide the parent in each and every case."

Unfortunately, in spite of the work of Dawes, Williams, and Saer, Smith, and Hughes, the language position in Wales has deteriorated in the past thirty years. Two national linguistic investigations **have during that** period of time been found necessary: "Welsh in Education and Life" in 1927 and "The Place of Welsh and English in the Schools of Wales" in 1953. Both these comprehensive reports published by the Ministry of Education, bear witness to the general increase of English and the general decline of Welsh. My own report "Bilingualism in Wales, with special reference to Second Language Teaching, and some account of the Bilingual Position in Eire and Belgium," published by Juta and Company earlier this year, described the position as I found it on my six-month visit in 1951. The new "Welsh Schools," i.e. Welsh-medium Primary schools, although a hopeless minority, are at least a sign of light on the horizon. It is the stress on local authority and lack of central direction in Welsh education that has led to the present confusion. Local control of education is too entrenched and English too established. As I state in my report: "It is admitted at the highest levels of Welsh education that it is one thing to formulate a policy, and quite another to implement it." "Quot homines, tot sententiae."

I come next to a work by a South African, C. H. Schmidt, who in 1926 published "The Language Medium Question: The Relation between Language and Thought as illustrated by the experience of teaching

through a foreign medium" (van Schaik). He later became Professor of Psychology in the University College of the O.F.S. His book is divided into two main parts, the direct relation of language to thought, and the indirect relation. He discusses the nature of language and of thought, the part played by language in thought, the motives for making a foreign language the medium of instruction, a method of replacing the mother tongue as medium if the home language is inadequate for higher education, and the adverse effects of the use of a foreign medium. This last, a foreign medium, he shows, affects thought by affecting perception, the strength and variety of associations, interest and attention, expression of thought, the relation between school and home, and the spread of culture. Let me quote from Professor Schmidt:—

"When a child comes to school we should try to make use of the interests and associations that have already been formed. He already has a number of language associations, and a store of knowledge obtained through this language and associated with it. The natural method would be to make use of these associations and interests, and not to start at once with a new language and subject matter. This fact has given us such maxims as 'proceed from the known to the unknown' and 'it is wrong to teach the unknown through the medium of that which is equally unknown.'"

And again:— "It is thus perfectly clear that expression through a foreign medium, both orally and written, is more difficult and fatiguing; this affects our thought, which is consequently of a lower standard. If we merely had to express ourselves for one period during the day in a foreign language, it would not affect us much, but when we have to get all our instruction through its medium, matters are more serious."

Professor Schmidt makes a very important point when he refers to Adler's theory of the inferiority complex. He goes on to say that "a person who is taught through the medium of a foreign language, in which he finds it difficult to follow the teaching to express himself, will become discouraged, and feel himself inferior to others who can express themselves in their home language.

This kind of thing (he says) is all very well when it happens occasionally, but when it happens continuously we become discouraged and consequently unresponsive."

I would draw your attention to the valuable bibliographies to be found in certain works on bilingualism and foreign languages. Such refer-

ences will, if you are interested, put you on to further reading in the subject as a whole. I have in mind particularly the work of Seth Arsenian, "Bilingualism and Mental Development: a Study of the Intelligence and the Social Background of Bilingual Children in New York City." This valuable example of modern experimental method in educational research was published by the Teachers' College, Columbia University, in 1937. Here the author discusses various aspects of bilingualism, the background of the problem as a whole, the purpose, material, and plan of his own investigation, the relation of bilingual background to certain social factors, bilingualism and mental development, and bilingualism in relation to intelligence and thinking.

In this study Dr. Arsenian states: "Our data indicate that a considerable amount of bilingualism still exists in certain immigrant groups. In families, the period of whose stay in this country has not been long, little English is spoken. It is evident that children from these families entering the kindergarten or the first grade of the public school know much less English than children coming from English-speaking homes. And yet the methods of instruction used in the public schools are practically the same everywhere; they recognise no distinction between the English and the foreign-speaking children. A great deal of the school retardation we find among the children of bilingual background may well be due to this inadequate beginning of their study in the English language. According to Ide ("Spoken Language an Essential Tool", 1921): 'The foreign child sits in kindergarten for a year or more and yet does not learn more than the meanings of half a dozen commands during the whole time he is there. He often enters the first grade with no knowledge of English. He may pick up enough of the language to get on to second grade the first year, but the chances are that he remains in the first grade at least two years before he has acquired enough language to read at all Many children who **apparently** understand a great deal of English, really understand their **teachers**—their gestures, the inflection of the voices—and it is **these** they obey, and not the words which the teacher uses in her **commands**.' It is evident (continues Dr. Arsenian) that the same method of instruction should not be applied to children coming from English-speaking and foreign-speaking homes until the latter have a fair mastery of the English language. The instruction in the kindergarten and the lower grades in immigrant communities should be diversified to meet the educational needs of the foreign-speaking child."

In his General Summary Dr. Arsenian states his findings on American

bilingualism with scholarly caution, and points out the need for scientific research into language problems. He says: "On the basis of the tests used and in the light of the results obtained in this research it is concluded that bilingualism does not influence—favourably or unfavourably—the mental development of children of ages 9 through 14 in the various groups studied in this investigation. . . . Bilingualism may be advantageous in providing an extension in one's experiences and contacts with the achievements of other cultures; it may on the other hand involve certain difficulties in the mastery of any language, in facility and accuracy of expression, in rapidity and comprehension of reading, in pronunciation, and may even have certain emotional consequences not altogether desirable. There is a dearth of experimental data on all these problems. At the present time at least, no detailed and definite conclusions are available to be applied to all cases of bilingualism. The problem should be studied and dealt with in each case within the scope of conditions present in a bilingual situation."

I think I have quoted enough to show that the evidence in favour of the educational principle of mother tongue medium is overwhelming and its arguments unanswerable, or rather, unanswered. There are other authorities on language whom I might quote; e.g. H. R. Huse, another American, whose "Psychology of Foreign Language Study" was published by the University of North Carolina Press in 1931. This book, under the heading of "Bilingualism and Mental Development" (p. 135), gives a valuable summary of the views of some of the experimental investigators I have mentioned and of several more, such as Epstein, Stern, Lentz, and Laurie. Huse's book is another with a useful bibliography. I may also mention the Calcutta University Commission Report (1917/1919), the Report of the Imperial Education Conference (1923), and the Report of the Canadian Committee on Modern Language Study (1927). Then there is "The Education of the South African Native" (Longmans Green) in 1917 by the late Dr. C. T. Loram: this deals with the question of vernacular teaching and the bar to progress after early adolescence caused by early teaching through an unfamiliar medium.

It remains for me, before I pass on to the second part of my paper, to mention some of the writings in Afrikaans on mother tongue education. Many of these are merely pamphlets, and most are doubtless too well known to you for me to say much about them, but I may as well make reference to one or two.

“Die Taalmediumvraagstuk: ’n Geskiedkundige Oorsig van die Voertaalprobleem in die O.V.S. en Transvaal, met spesiale verwysing na Enkel-, Parallel-, en Dubbelmediumskole”, by Edmund Botes, was published in 1941 by the University of Pretoria. Then there is “Moedertaal en Tweetaligheid”, by P. J. Meyer (Pro Ecclesia-boekhandel, Stellenbosch), 1945; and “Die Behoud van die Afrikaanse Skole: Referate gelewer by die Kerklike Kongres oor Enkelmedium-skole—Desember 1942, Besluite van die Kongres en die Minderheidsverslag van Lede van die Provinsiale Onderwyskommissie—1939”, published by Voortrekkerpers, Johannesburg, in 1943 and containing contributions by well-known Afrikaners like Dr. J. Chr. Coetzee and Dr. B. F. Nel. I have omitted any reference to the mainly emotional and propaganda type of writing, both in Afrikaans and in English, on the subject of mother tongue education in this country.

Now for the second part of my paper: Other Tongue. In South Africa we are committed to the single-medium school, and I think rightly so. It remains for us to determine to find, and to succeed in finding, better methods of teaching the second language in our schools.

South Africa is, for better or worse, a bilingual country; we have committed ourselves to bilingualism, and must not shirk its implications. But before I pass on to specific ways of improving our existing standards, let me briefly attempt to get the question of bilingualism as a whole into some sort of perspective. Bilingualism is important to us all in this country, but it is not as important as national culture, or in our case, cultures. We have two, but we need only to live our lives through one. No man can express himself satisfactorily through two cultures. Fortunately, we are not called upon to do so. As Professor Michael Roberts states, in “The Crisis of Finnish Bilingualism”: “No really serious attempt has been made in the Union at a bilingualism based on the principle of ‘locality’: essentially our bilingualism depends on the recognition of the rights of the individual. Indeed, the whole structure of South African bilingualism appears somewhat rough-and-ready in comparison with the elaborate precision of the Finnish legislation on the subject.”

It is often forgotten how magnificently fair the South African system of bilingualism is. Many educationists to whom I spoke in Wales expressed their envy of a system by which the two sections of our population are free to express their lives through their own language, and can enjoy in equal measure separate facilities such as schools, newspapers, local

journals, radio transmissions, and linguistic consideration by government and municipal officials. Language, as you have heard from my educational authorities, is the best expression of the group spirit, and our first duty is to our respective language and through it to our respective culture. Our next duty is to our neighbour's language. Hence the importance of bilingualism, which, though an unnatural condition for any country, gives us a means of communication with one another.

How can we improve our present standards of bilingualism, and so improve the means of communication between us? One answer is by means of scientific research into language teaching in our schools. The need for such linguistic investigation has been pointed out more than once. The Imperial Education Conference of 1923 stated in its Report: "The Conference desires to recognise the desirability of scientific investigation of the facts of bilingualism with reference to the intellectual, emotional, and moral development of the child, and the importance of the questions of practical educational method arising out of the investigation of such facts."

In 1928 the American and the Canadian Committees on Modern Languages reviewed previous investigations of bilingualism and reported similarly. In 1937 Dr. Seth Arsenian stated, in "Bilingualism and Mental Development", a book to which I have already made reference:—"The possibilities of research in the field of bilingualism are numerous."

In my Bilingual Report on Wales, Eire, and Belgium, I make certain recommendations for the improvement of the bilingual position in this country. The first of these recommendations is the creation in each province of representative Research Councils in Language, which, in co-operation with the South African National Council for Social Research, might investigate questions such as the compilation of basic vocabularies of some 2,500 words in English and Afrikaans, and the general use in second language teaching of text-books specially written within the limits of graded language material. I make various other recommendations, but let us first deal with this matter, for it is one of vital importance.

It is an accepted principle in education that the ways in which a child learns a first language at home and a second language at school are fundamentally different. The first is natural and spontaneous, the second is neither. To save time and to facilitate progress in second language learning, selection and gradation of language matter should be undertaken in accordance with certain general principles governing such selec-

tion and gradation. Maximum utility is the aim: the child proceeds step by step, with the aid of systematic and controlled drill, both written and oral. Second language learning becomes, not the haphazard process it is at present, but an orderly progression which can be objectively measured. It is remarkable how much can be achieved in the linguistic training of a child by means of a thoroughly digested vocabulary of some two thousand active language units (not single words or monologs) and regular practice in speech-moulds. Such a vocabulary should be carefully built up from a firm basis of six or seven hundred at Primary school level, at the rate of some three hundred additional such units every year. Linguistic restriction on these lines is confined to the initial and intermediate stages of acquisition, and is not the ultimate end of such teaching, but merely the means to an end. The pupil may, at the conclusion of his Secondary school course, proceed normally with the study of the language, assisted by a training which, though limited, is not artificial in the sense in which, for instance, Mr. C. K. Ogden's Basic English is artificial. In the case of English, it is not simplified English that is aimed at, but the simplification of the teaching of English.

A language commission of 125 research workers, including H. Bongers and A. de la Court, experimented on these lines in the Netherlands East Indies. Their findings were presented in "Rationeel Taalonderwijs" in 1935. From their own observations and experiments and from previous researches in word counting conducted by Michael West in India and the late Harold Palmer in Japan, they succeeded in systematising the Nederlands language material. This they did by means of selection based on objectively determined criteria; and produced a Basic Nederlands vocabulary of just over 3,000 words, a knowledge of which is the key to an understanding of 95% of any normal Nederlands text. Basic Nederlands is at present in active use in Belgium for second language teaching, as exemplified in the text-books of Dr. Gaston Vannes and others. Such essential matter in any language Palmer has called the microcosm of the language.

I cannot go more fully into the question of basic language matter now, but I would refer those of you interested to the works of Mr. West, the late Mr. Harold Palmer, and the American investigators Coleman and Thorndike. I may also mention the work of a colleague of mine, Dr. I. J. Fourie, Senior Lecturer in English in the Potchefstroom University. In 1950 his "Fundamentals of Second Language Teaching: Selection and

Grading of Language Matter for the Teaching of English as Second Language in South Africa" was published by J. L. van Schaik as No. 3 in the University's series "Bydraes tot die Opvoedkunde". This book presents the central theme in Dr. Fourie's thesis for the D.Phil. degree in Education of the University of South Africa, and contains a useful bibliography.

Linguistic experimentation is being undertaken in Wales today. I recently received a letter from Mr. Arthur Pinsent, Area Advisory Officer to the Faculty of Education in the University College of Wales, Aberystwyth, in which he writes:—"You will be interested to know that at long last there is some movement towards a more systematic program of research into some of the problems we discussed when you were here. The Faculty of Education at Aberystwyth has begun the issue of a series of research pamphlets. The first is a list of problems for research into bilingual conditions. This was based on a survey of schools. The second contains the modified Hoffman schedule which we have called a measure of Welsh Linguistic Background. The third will be a discussion of the construction and use of standardised tests with particular reference to Wales. A research student is using the Linguistic Background Schedule in order to estimate the effect of home language on scores in four non-verbal tests of intelligence. Also, during the past three months, the Faculties of Education in Aberystwyth and Bangor combined to run a series of tests of intelligence and attainment in a mixed language population in North and Mid Wales, the object being to get some information about the effect of language mixture on non-verbal intelligence scores, and on achievement in Arithmetic, English and Welsh. So we are beginning to get a move on towards collecting some factual information."

My first suggestion, then, for improvement in our bilingual standards is that we should put the vexed question of the teaching of languages on to a factual basis by means of a national programme of intensive research into various aspects of the problem. It is not that I believe blindly in research *per se*; I state clearly at the conclusion of my Bilingual Report that I do not, for language and value judgments are incapable of measurement by quantitative methods. But first the present confusion must be cleared up, the present emotionalism replaced as far as possible by scientific detachment; and it is our linguistic researchers who must do this. In time, it may be possible thus to draw up comprehensive surveys of language requirements, and balance the claims of the official languages

against those of other subjects.

This brings me to my second recommendation: that of more intensive teaching of English and Afrikaans at Primary level, with a consequent reduction in the number of subjects taught. We have overloaded our Primary school syllabuses, and basic studies like the "Three R's" have **suffered as a result**. Rather should we concentrate on first language, second language, and arithmetic. At Primary level the second language ought to be taught by highly qualified specialist teachers, so that a higher standard of attainment may be possible at Secondary entrance. The standard of second language at University entrance must also be improved, for "Special" or "Practical English" at University level is a desperate remedy. We university teachers can only do our best with the human material passed on to us by the schools. I have something to say about this in my chapter on "English as Second Language in the South African University" in "Beginsels en Metodes van die Hoër Onderwys", a symposium by the Teaching Staff of the Potchefstroom University published by J. L. van Schaik in 1949.

What I really think we suffer from in South Africa is a "subject **complex**". Our pupils are expected to master a certain amount of material in various subjects, but each is regarded as merely a subject, unrelated to other subjects, even in the same field, or to life itself. Here a paper read by Dorothy Sayers at Oxford some years ago comes to mind: "The Lost Tools of Learning". In this brilliant little study Miss Sayers deprecates the modern insistence on subjects **per se**, and draws attention to the advantages, which we today are so prone to overlook, of the mediaeval system of traditional intellectual disciplines provided by a study of the classics and the natural sciences. Thus Latin became, not merely a study of Latin as a language, but a key to the study of all languages.

We may well ask ourselves: are our children getting a training in fundamental thinking? Is the modern stress on empiricism and particularly on vocationalism in education proving a barrier to intellectual development? The difficulties of mass education are mainly the result of social pressures and, as such, are outside the control of the schools themselves. Such difficulties are world-wide, but the educational evils engendered by modern social attitudes are as evident in South Africa as anywhere else. Britain, with older tradition of grammar or public school and university training may still be said to have a somewhat healthier attitude to this fundamental question.

A third recommendation I make is the possibility of experimenting

with the teaching of a "neutral" subject, on a half-syllabus through the medium of the second language from Standards VII to X in our schools. Such a suggestion has nothing whatever to do with dual- or any other medium save single-medium education. It is merely a part of the English or the Afrikaans lesson, a complementary exercise to it, the application of the language to a definite and limited content field. Obviously there are immense practical difficulties in any such "content" approach to second language teaching; I am merely indicating one specific problem for experimentation.

Other recommendations which I make in my Report are the provision of detailed and systematic Codes of Teaching for both languages at both levels; a more effective system of oral examination at Matriculation/School Leaving Certificate level; the organisation of vacation and other courses for teachers of English and Afrikaans; the appointment of Regional Organisers of Language Training as a specialised branch of the Inspectorate; and the provision of facilities to enable inspectors of schools to gain experience of linguistic practice in other countries. The need for all these, I think, is self-evident. In addition, our entire examination system might well be investigated for possible improvements, not as the system presents itself in theory, but as it turns out in practice, with its mad annual quest for "results" and even "symbols"; and especially as it affects the standard of teaching of first and above all second language in our schools.
