

PERTH MODERN SCHOOL:

The First Ten Years

by

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Abstract

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the first ten years of Perth Modern School, from 1911 - 1921, and its role in the establishment of state secondary education in Western Australia. The struggle of Cecil Andrews, the Director of Education, to gain support for the notion of free and secular secondary education is documented, together with the influence of the first two headmasters, F.G. Brown and Joseph Parsons, who were both responsible in their own ways for establishing the ethos of the school which became the model for future state high schools in Western Australia.

Broad questions of the aims and functions of Perth Modern School and the increasingly academic elitism which developed during the first decade as a selective state high school are addressed in the light of economic, political and social conditions of the period. A narrower and more specific examination is made of the composition of students and staff in the first ten years, entry qualifications to the school and the curriculum in the lower and upper schools.

Archival research was undertaken over several years at the Battye Library, the Rooney Library, the Education Department, the Perth Modern School archives and in the Perth Modern School's Principal's office. It is disappointing that very

little new material has come to light in response to the extensive search, but some small satisfaction was gained by the discovery of certain uncatalogued documents in the Principal's office filing cabinet which have added to the body of knowledge on the subject. Oral history was employed extensively and is considered to be a valuable contribution to the subject. Originally this study was to have covered the period 1911-1958: unfortunately when the decision was made to limit it to the first decade much of the information obtained by the oral history research method could not then be quoted within the narrow confines of the dissertation. It did however serve as useful background material and could be employed in a future study with a broader framework of reference. The writer was a teacher at the school and while on the staff became concerned at the number of past students from the first decade whose deaths were reported without any documentation of their early recollections of school life. An attempt was made to reach as many from the period 1911 - 1921 that could be interviewed and every care has been taken to verify personal statements.

No educational history has been written of Perth Modern School. This study seeks to raise certain questions and fill part of the gap on this subject in the history of education in Western Australia.

ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|--------|--|
| ANZHES | Australian and New Zealand History of Education Society |
| EDF | Education Department File |
| MUP | Melbourne University Press |
| OUP | Oxford University Press |
| PMS | Perth Modern School |
| PMSA | Perth Modern School Archives |
| SUP | Sydney University Press |
| UWA | University of Western Australia |
| UWAP | University of Western Australia Press |
| WAED | Western Australian Education Department |
| WAVP | Western Australia, <i>Votes and Proceedings of the Legislative Council and Minutes and Votes and Votes and Proceedings of the Parliament</i> |

Chapter 1

Perth Modern School is unique in the history of education in Western Australia and it played a prominent part in the development of secondary education in the state. This study examines the foundation of the school and its role as an example of a generic group of government selective secondary schools found throughout Australia during the period 1911-21. The purpose of the study is to trace the early historical development of the school and to assess its function as the first secondary school in Western Australia, where it became a model for the future state high school system.

The study is limited to the first ten years of the school's history. This time frame was selected in order to concentrate the focus on the period from 1911 when the ethos, attitudes and reputation of the school evolved, to 1921 when they had become fully established.

No educational history of Perth Modern School has been published, although three minor research studies were carried out by Claremont and Graylands College students in 1957,¹ 1962,² and 1963,³ and Bennie wrote a very brief chronological history of the school from its foundation to the year 1976.⁴ Perth Modern School is mentioned in several educational histories and publications of a wider scope, although most of the information

is based on the same small amount of primary source material and of necessity must be repeated in this study. It is disappointing that extensive archival research at the West Australian State Library, the Education Department and the school itself failed to produce more than a minimal amount of new material. However, an important source of information was explored by means of oral history. A number of personal interviews were held with ex-students from the first decade of the school, all of whom are now octagenarians. Their willing co-operation provided a valuable contribution to the study. Care has been taken to cross-reference, wherever possible, all information given at personal interviews and it is considered that the material obtained from these Old Modernians, some of whom have since died, is of particular importance in adding to the body of knowledge on this subject.

This study investigates the work of the early educational administrators and Inspectors-General in Western Australia and the first two Perth Modern School headmasters, the composition of the early student body and teaching staff, the subjects studied, entry qualifications and the non-academic school activities. It also examines the standing of the school in Western Australian society as it established a reputation for scholastic achievement, acknowledging that the selective nature of the entry qualifications ensured that it would produce students of a high academic standard, many of whom were to become national and international identities in adult life.

Broader issues addressed include the role which this essentially elitist institution was to serve as the forerunner of the future egalitarian state high schools. Questions are raised as the development of the school is traced through its first ten years and the function of the school is examined and compared with its original goals. Was it mainly university-oriented in the belief that the private schools could not provide a bridge for upwardly mobile groups emerging from the elementary schools towards tertiary education? Was the school established to provide a source for the supply of future teachers? Were the Old Modernians eligible for entry into the wealthy elite? Did the school become a successful competitor of the prestigious independent schools and how did these schools view the advent of the new state secondary school? Disparities between the aims and the practices of the school will be identified as these questions are discussed, together with the notion of elitism and the extent to which it was encouraged by Joseph Parsons.

NOTES

1. Hackjath, J, *The History of Modern School, 1907-1917*, Research study, Claremont Teachers' College, 1957
2. Hetherington, Judith, *A History of Perth Modern School, 1917-1958*, Research study, Claremont Teachers' College, 1962
3. Walker, L, *Modern School - Old and New*, Research study, Graylands Teachers' College, 1963
4. Bennie, Dorothy, *A Brief History of Perth Modern School 1911-1977*, Research study, Graylands Teachers' College, 1977

Chapter 2

The years 1905 - 1915 were of great significance in the development of education in Australia for it was during this period that social, political and economic pressures led to educational reforms and the establishment of a government secondary school system in each state. In Victoria the Melbourne Continuation School was opened in 1905 and by 1911 there were twelve state high schools, all developed during the early administration of Frank Tate as Director of Education. Peter Board was appointed as Director of Education in New South Wales in 1905 and the first new state high school for twenty years was opened at Newcastle the following year. In South Australia Adelaide High School, which was the first free state high school in Australia, was opened in 1908 and by 1909 there were twelve district high schools in that state. Two state high schools were opened in Tasmania in 1913, one in Hobart and one in Launceston, following the appointment of W.T. McCoy as the Director of Education four years earlier. In Western Australia Perth Modern School was founded amidst controversy and public disagreement which was aired in parliament and the press for several years before the school opened in 1911.

The history of education in Western Australia is dominated by economic factors. The population increased enormously following a series of gold discoveries which began in 1885 in

the Kimberleys and culminated in the Murchison region with the opening of rich fields in Kalgoorlie and Coolgardie. In 1870 the total population of Western Australia was 25,084 and in the following decade this rose to a mere 29,019 by 1880. It grew slowly, reaching 46,290 in 1890 but by 1900 had jumped to 179,708.¹ Perth underwent significant social changes as a result of this population explosion and the economic consequences of the gold boom. The years following the discovery of gold were ones of rapid progress, with improvements in communication and transport services across the vast distances of the state. Trade, industry and commerce flourished in this climate of economic prosperity and Western Australia thrived. Imports into the colony stood at £364,263 per annum in 1874 but had risen to £650,391 by 1885. Similarly, exports rose from £428,837 to £446,692 in the same period, then jumped dramatically the following year to £630,393 with the first shipments of gold from Western Australia.² Wool had been the leading export from the earliest trading times, but in 1893 it was replaced by gold, which comprised 88% of export income by 1900³

Responsible government was granted to Western Australia in 1890. Upper and Lower Houses of Parliament were established and the self-governing colony was administered by a cabinet led by Sir John Forrest. By the end of the century the goldfields were in decline, but agriculture, particularly wheat farming, was expanding and the population continued to increase, reaching

184,124 in 1901⁴ when Western Australia entered the new Federal Commonwealth. The economy continued to prosper throughout the first years of the twentieth century, with agricultural exports increasing as gold production decreased. Itinerant miners were absorbed into the workforce on the land and were joined by their families who, together with British migrants (many of whom were financially assisted) brought the population to 167,993 in 1911 when Perth Modern School opened.⁵

The first political party to emerge in Western Australia was the Labor Party in 1901, when federal and state elections were held within a few weeks of each other. Four of the five Labor candidates were successful in the first federal election and six of the twenty-two candidates in the state poll were elected. By 1904 Labor had strengthened to become the largest single political party in Western Australia and all twenty selected candidates won their seats in the state election held that year. Labor won government mainly due to the support of trade unionists from the goldfields.

The non-Labor members of the Western Australian House of Assembly needed to form an alliance to combat the Labor movement which was growing in strength and support. The National Political Leagues were founded in 1904 and the Liberal League in 1906. These amalgamated in 1907 to become the National Liberal League which fought and won the federal election that year. This merger led to the foundation of the Liberal Party in

Western Australia in 1911, a significant year in the history of state secondary education. Meanwhile Labor also strengthened its support by reorganising its structure and bringing together the trade union and political wings, resulting in a landslide victory for the party led by John Scaddan in the 1911 state election, so ending five years of Liberal Government. It was during this period of political development and increasing strength of the Labor Party that arguments and controversy raged over the state secondary education question and the founding of Perth Modern School.

In 1893 the Western Australian Education Department was established under the administration of a Minister for Education and in 1896 Cyril Jackson was appointed as its first professional head. Although he was only thirty-four years old when he came from England and remained in the state just six years, he was to become an important figure in the development of education during this period as he brought with him from London the knowledge and understanding of the principles of the New Education. Under Jackson emphasis in the elementary school curriculum was shifted from the memorisation of facts and rote learning to the cultivation of the powers of observation which would lead to intelligent understanding. He believed that teachers should take children 'from the known to the unknown, from the concrete to the abstract, from observation of individual things to their comparison and correlation, and thence to the higher processes of thought.'⁶ These modern

teaching methods, which elevated the needs of the child, introduced an enlightened approach in the classroom, with teachers encouraged to make lessons interesting. Increased attention was given to literature, history and geography and "object" lessons stimulated the imagination by encouraging powers of observation. Selected objects were handled and examined in the classroom and pupils reasoned and made deductions from their observations. Foundations were laid for future self-education in the elementary school curriculum in these days before the introduction of secondary schooling and Jackson encouraged teachers to meet and exchange educational ideas and theories.

Cyril Jackson also brought with him from London the belief that elementary education should be available to all. On his arrival he found that there were 131 state elementary schools but no state secondary schools. Post-elementary education could only be undertaken by the privileged at fee-paying schools although a small number of government scholarships were available to assist a deserving minority of state school children to obtain private secondary school education. Although Jackson believed that this arrangement was inadequate he did not become involved with any moves to introduce state secondary education during his tenure as Inspector-General. Probably this was due to the amount of work required in other areas: firstly, the urgent necessity to gain administrative control of the Education Department, which until his appointment

had been assumed by the Education Secretary, O.P. Staples, with whom he clashed early in his period of office. Dissension also developed between Jackson and his first Minister for Education, E.H. Wittenoom, in 1897. Disagreements arose from the Inspector-General's public criticism of the standard of education in Western Australia, including certain views which were published in the press without the permission of the Minister. This conflict culminated in Jackson offering his resignation, which was not accepted. Fortunately for the Education Department the Minister was replaced shortly afterwards and the position of Education Secretary was abolished. Jackson had won the battle and gained authority to exercise control over the professional work of the department. Once this was achieved he became involved in the area of curriculum reform and the introduction of the New Education ideals into Western Australian elementary schools. This was followed by reform of the inspection system: by 1900 teachers with good reports were made responsible for their own pupil promotion, which at once emancipated them and relieved the Inspector-General of the burdensome task of inspection work and allowed him to use the time to observe and assist the teachers. He was also involved in the development of technical education and improved the conditions of service for teachers, so it is hardly surprising that he did not have time to turn his attention to secondary education during his six years in Western Australia.

Jackson leaves no clue as to why he resigned in 1903 and returned to England to further his career. Following his earlier outspoken criticism which caused such controversy he became more restrained in his public comments and no recorded reason for his departure has been discovered. He was, however, a man of independent means which would have allowed him greater freedom to pursue his job interests than if he had been reliant on his salary alone. He had a varied and distinguished career in Britain, eventually becoming chairman of the London County Council, serving on several important committees and commissions and receiving a knighthood in 1917.

It was Jackson's successor, Cecil Andrews, who undertook the task of introducing secular state secondary education into Western Australia. Andrews arrived in Perth from England in 1901 to become the first principal of Claremont Teachers' College. He had been selected from forty-five applicants for the position by Cyril Jackson, who indicated that Andrews could expect to succeed him as Inspector-General within a few years,⁷ so it is clear that Jackson was contemplating his resignation as early as 1900. On arrival in Western Australia Andrews stayed with Jackson for several weeks and they wrote a series of articles together on the teaching of reading. Andrews spent a year at the Teachers' College before his appointment as Inspector-General, during which time he would have discovered the educational shortcomings of teacher training students, very few of whom had experienced any form of secondary education

other than monitorial classes held out of school hours. Andrews himself was the son of an impoverished clergyman and had received his own education at Merchant Taylors' School in London and St. John's College, Oxford, by means of scholarships. On graduation he had become a resident tutor at St. John's Teachers' College, Battersea. It is possible that this background sowed the seeds of his commitment to state education in general and his desire to establish state secondary education in particular.

Cecil Andrews inherited from Cyril Jackson a solid foundation on which to build the Education Department of the twentieth century. Reforms to the administration had resulted in improved efficiency and the introduction of the principles of New Education led to curriculum reform. Jackson improved conditions for both pupils and teachers, evening continuation classes and technical education had been established and the opening of the first training college for teachers ensured the raising of teaching standards.

Soon after assuming office as Inspector-General Andrews prepared a memorandum for the Premier, Walter James, emphasising the need for state secondary education. James was already in sympathy with the notion and included in his policy speech for 1903 the information that:

The first secondary school is to be built in Perth and is to accommodate at least two hundred youths at the outset.²

Soon afterwards, however, James was defeated at the 1904 polls and Andrews was left to pursue the matter with his successor, Henry Daglish. News soon spread that something was afoot and the first murmurs of opposition were heard. The *W.A. Record*, a Catholic weekly paper which had been established in 1874, described the proposal as 'so unfair, so unnecessary, so undemocratic that we trust it will receive short shrift should legislation be taken upon it' and expressed outrage that such a venture should be undertaken with the support of public funds, describing it as 'an institution of luxury provided for the rich man at the cost of his poor neighbour.'⁹

Cecil Andrews was to spend the next two years in professional isolation. Daglish was replaced by C.H. Rason: both Premiers were unsympathetic to his aims and the education budget was drastically reduced as the gold mining industry declined. A gold yield of £8,617,959 was recorded in 1903¹⁰, but this was down to £7,538,051 in 1905¹¹ and was reduced further to £5,649,479 by 1910.¹² Andrews struggled to keep the issue of state secondary education alive in this climate of economic downturn, stating in his 1904 Inspector-General's Report:

So far the efforts of the state have been mainly directed towards securing a satisfactory system of Primary Education and good Technical Schools. The question of the provision of higher grade schools to bridge the gap between the two must soon be faced.¹³

Earlier in the same year he was quoted in the *Western Mail* as saying that a secondary school would be established in Perth.¹⁴ Opposition increased but Andrews continued to argue his case and in his 1905 Report announced that the Education Department would soon open a higher-grade school which would provide four year courses for children over the age of twelve. He sent several memoranda to his Minister over the next two years, culminating in his 1907 Report entitled 'A Note on Secondary Education'. In it he summarised the reasons for the need for secondary education and suggested three possible methods by which it could be achieved:

1. by an extension of the provision of free places in private secondary schools in return for a government subsidy to those schools.
2. by the addition of upper classes in selected elementary schools with the provision of special teachers to staff them.
3. by the opening of new government high schools.

Andrews attached this Note to his official report for 1907 which ensured that it was tabled in Parliament and hoped that it would reach the general public through the press. It seems that this was a successful move for it was published in full in the *West Australian* and eventually leading parliamentarians and public

figures were persuaded to support the cause of state education beyond the existing six years.

By 1907 Premier Rason had been replaced by J. Newton Moore whose main preoccupation was in opening up vast areas of agricultural land on the wheatbelt and had little interest in educational matters other than to provide elementary schools in the new outlying districts. He did, however, appoint a very competent Minister for Education, Frank Wilson, who was persuaded by Andrews to join him in the lobby for state secondary education and who became a powerful ally. Wilson gained cabinet approval for the establishment of a higher grade school and it is interesting to note that this was announced by another minister, J.L. Nanson, on Wilson's behalf to the Teachers' Conference in May 1907 before the official allocation of funds for the purpose, which were not made public until the Loan Estimates were approved in December of that year.¹⁵ Next Andrews tackled the Teachers' Conference of 1908 and called for its support in the sectional arguments which flared when it was revealed that the government had set aside money for the construction of a state secondary school.

It is difficult for educationists in the late twentieth century with their broad experience of free secular secondary education for all to comprehend the public campaign of vilification which was waged against Andrews in 1908 and 1909. It is a measure of his strength of character that he did not

resign and return to England. The first salvo was fired by John Winthrop Hackett, editor of the *West Australian* expressing strong opposition to the opening of a state secondary school. He objected both to the cost and to the notion that greater priority was to be given to state secondary education rather than to the establishment of a university in Perth.¹⁶ Hackett became the dominant force in the foundation of the University of Western Australia which opened in 1913 and he is esteemed for his place in the history of that institution, but it is to his discredit that he allowed the pages of the *West Australian* to be used for a biased and antagonistic series of articles and letters from the private school lobby against the Inspector-General.

The *West Australian* published Andrews' Note on 24 July and the following week the first letter was published from F.C. Faulkner, Headmaster of Perth High School and President of the (non-government) Secondary Schools' Association. In it he attacked Andrews viciously saying:

The Inspector-General - and I am now speaking of him only in his public capacity - for some reason best known to himself, regards himself as a sort of deity who must be inaccessible, surrounded by and encompassed in clouds of thick darkness, and whom an ordinary person must not approach. Surely under such circumstances we may ask ourselves whether he has any special qualifications which enable him to be the sole judge of what is advisable for secondary schools. By him and by the Department we are treated with arrogant aloofness, which is, to say the least, amusing, though at times it is annoying and almost intolerable. We are dealt with by the Department, though who gave the Department any authority over secondary education I do not know: but I do know this, that the literacy and

mathematical eccentricities of some of its officers are such as to fill us with dread and dismay, rather than with confidence. If such a state of things exists now, what would happen to a man with any originality and power under the State regime? Why, he would be ignominiously kicked out.¹⁷

This malicious letter was followed by an equally subjective interview with P.C. Anderson, the headmaster of Scotch College. It was published in the *West Australian* at great length and expressed his objections to the proposal,¹⁸ which were supported by a letter from Brother W. Lynch of the Christian Brothers' College,¹⁹ who also joined the fray.

Why did these private school headmasters attack the Inspector-General publicly through the pages of the press with such determination? From their comments it could be deduced that they considered their own positions to be under threat and perceived the need to defend their schools. Perth High School was granted an annual government subsidy and the other members of the Secondary Schools' Association received assistance by means of state funded scholarships to a number of deserving students from state schools to attend private schools for their secondary education. Controversial statements which the headmasters made at this time concerning the merits of science teaching in state versus private schools and slurs on the abilities of the Education Department Inspectors were probably red herrings drawn across the trail as the private schools feared for their own interests. Perhaps these headmasters also

realised that the state secondary school would attract potential students away from their institutions, which in fact occurred when Perth Modern School was established and accepted high achieving students of middle class parents who could have afforded the private school fees.

The private schools headmasters continued to defend their position by attacking the Inspector-General in the press while Andrews prepared a lengthy and dignified response to his critics, which was published in full in the *West Australian* over two days in August 1908.²⁰ He disposed of all their arguments skilfully and pointed out to Hackett that any plans for a university should be preceded by a state secondary school to supply it with undergraduates. It is difficult to assess how much importance the community placed on this unpleasant public controversy, but Cecil Andrews emerged from it in a position of increased strength and his reputation was enhanced. It also served his purpose in making the public more aware of the value of state secondary education, but in doing so he had upset the private school lobby and they would neither forgive him nor the school for which he strived.

Despite this opposition from the private schools the regulation to establish the new secondary school had already been announced, the government had approved the funding for it in the 1907 Loan Estimates and in August 1909 the contract for the building was let with the completion date due in March 1910.

Andrews remained intimately involved with all stages of the planning and development as his aims for state secondary education were realised. These were to be very different from those of the existing private secondary schools. The main emphasis was to be given to the development of the teaching of science and modern languages and while classics was to be included it was not to form the core of the curriculum as in the traditional schools modelled on the British public school. The name Modern School was selected to set it apart from the private schools with their classics base: four year courses were to meet the demands of the Teachers' College for prospective students and to prepare others for scientific, agricultural and commercial careers. Andrews remained quietly determined in the face of bitter controversy and powerful opposition and had emerged from it in dignified triumph.

NOTES

1. Commonwealth of Australia, *Official Year Book*, No.1, 1908
2. *Statistical Register of Western Australia*, 1910
3. Ibid
4. Ibid
5. Commonwealth of Australia, *Official Year Book*, No. 6, 1913
6. WAED Report for 1898, WAVP 1899, P 15, p.7
7. David Mossenson, *A History of Teacher Training in Western Australia*, ACER, Melbourne, 1955, p.11
8. *Western Mail* 11 July 1903
9. *W.A. Record* 12 March 1904

- 10 *Statistical Register of Western Australia*, 1910
11. Ibid
12. Ibid
13. WAED Report for 1904, WAVP 1905, PP 11, p.11
14. *Western Mail* 16 April 1904
15. EDF 604, 1909
16. *West Australian* 30 April 1908
17. *West Australian* 30 July 1908
18. *West Australian* 31 July 1908
19. Ibid
20. *West Australian* 4/5 August 1908

Chapter 3

Perth Modern School opened in February 1911. The prospectus describes its situation as standing

in about fifteen acres of ground on the heights of West Perth. The grounds are within the Subiaco postal area, while the nearest railway station is West Leederville. The School can be reached in a few minutes from the Hay Street tram stopping at Thomas Street.'

The building cost £15,000 and the *West Australian* described it at the opening as having 'a magnificent assembly hall, which is a prominent feature of an altogether striking building'.² The school offered 250 places in 1911 and keen competition for the opening enrolment was experienced, resulting in a large number of applicants being refused admission. The entire student body from the Normal School, which Cecil Andrews had opened in 1907, transferred to Modern School and the Normal School closed down. From the outset Modern School was co-educational, the first of its kind in Western Australia and the number of girls and boys was reported to be in equal proportion.³ However the Minister for Education revealed in his Annual Report for 1911 that in fact the school opened with 100 girls and 150 boys.⁴ The *Education Circular* describes the buildings as 'excellently designed for their purpose' with the assembly hall, eight classrooms, an art room, physical and chemical laboratories, a science lecture room, cookery and laundry rooms, a dining room,

library and teachers' room.⁵ By 1918 the school provided accommodation for 400 students by the addition of a further five classrooms and the prospectus now lists a biology laboratory, a museum, a workshop and gymnasium together with the original buildings.⁶ No details are given concerning the function of the museum but it is listed under the heading of the science laboratories and described as being 'fitted with the necessary cases and cupboards.'⁷ An Education Department Report refers to the museum specimens as being 'those useful in physics, chemistry, biology, agriculture, geology and commercial geography.'⁸ Numbers at the school had increased to 500 by 1925 and sixteen classrooms were listed in the prospectus for that year.

Entrance to Perth Modern School in its first years was open to all who obtained the Junior Certificate and by payment of fees, which were set at £6 per annum, though these were abolished by the new Labor government in 1912. The government already offered fifty scholarships each year to enable deserving children to attend a private secondary school of their choice on a means-tested basis and these scholarships now became tenable at Perth Modern School. State aid to private schools continued in the form of these scholarships, so while many chose to attend Perth Modern School, not all did so.⁹ Qualifying Examinations were introduced in 1913 to establish selection procedures when the numbers of students qualified to attend increased beyond the

capacity of the school intake. The Headmaster's Report for 1911 states:

As towards the close of the year it was decided no longer to charge fees, the necessity arose to provide for the selection of students. Over 400 candidates sat for the secondary school scholarships and Modern School Entrance Examinations on the result of which 97 students were admitted to the lower school.¹⁰

Scholarship holders at Modern School had their tuition fees paid before they were abolished and were awarded £3 per year for books. Their Junior and Leaving Examination fees were paid and country students received a boarding allowance of £10 per term. Approved boarding houses were available and in the early years a residential house was run by Mrs. Mary Compton for country girls along the same lines as a boarding school, with form classes and a dormitory system. Strict hours of study were observed on weekdays and Mrs. Compton, who had a daughter at the school, took a keen interest in the welfare and progress of the girls in her care. A student who lived there in 1917 recalled:

We were proud to belong to Compton House and in the school we had a very good record of leadership, scholarship, socially and in sport. We were often the envy of others who felt Compton House girls possibly had an unfair advantage owing to the strict rules of the time.¹¹

F.G. Brown, headmaster of the Normal School, was appointed as first headmaster at Modern School. Previously he had been on the staff of Claremont Teachers' College as master of Normal

Studies when Cecil Andrews was the principal and therefore was regarded as experienced and well-qualified for the position. He remained at the school for only a few months, resigning in 1912 to take up an appointment as head of the new Naval College at Jervis Bay. He was succeeded by Joseph Parsons, a former colleague from the staff of Claremont College who had applied originally for the position when it was first advertised in 1910 while he was headmaster of Perth Boys' School. Both F.G. Brown and Parsons had been involved in teaching monitors' classes on Saturday mornings in Perth under a scheme devised by Cyril Jackson to improve the quality of teacher training. Secondary education was made available in these classes before the monitors entered training college and the minimum age for entry to Claremont College was raised to seventeen years, laying the groundwork for the training of future teachers for Perth Modern School. It is appropriate and fitting that these two men who were so influential in the development of secondary education in Western Australia should both become headmasters of Modern School in the early days.

Controversy still exists in Western Australia today concerning the relative influence of F.G. Brown and Joseph Parsons in establishing the unique ethos of the school. Personal interviews with ex-students from the 1911 to 1913 intakes reveal wide differences of opinion. One said:

F.G Brown was just a transitional headmaster from the Normal School who left little mark on the Mod.¹²

while another disagreed entirely:

The special Modern School ethos came from Mr. Brown. . . He was a gentle man who refused to allow corporal punishment and detention at the school. Discipline was maintained by encouraging self-discipline and all of us were expected to follow his example - those that didn't left the school. I don't know what happened to them, they simply disappeared.¹³

Dr. B.C. Cohen, who claimed to be the first student through the gates on opening day said of F.G. Brown:

From the start he tried to imbue it (the school) with a proper tone. The students were all keen and the school was new and up-to-date. It had to be kept clean.¹⁴

Another ex-student expanded on the development of the school 'tone' by F.G. Brown:

He explained that this was to be a 'Modern' school, it would not follow the traditional pattern of old English schools where pupils proudly carved their names on desks. Here desks and walls were to be kept spotless..... Application to study was to be for its own sake - there were to be no academic prizes, but awards only for sport. There were also to be no punishments. Thus the foundations of the school were laid.¹⁵

It is difficult after seventy-six years to determine where the truth lies, but it is probable that F.G. Brown did lay the foundations for the school ethos. Although he was headmaster for only just over a year he had brought with him from the Normal School the nucleus of senior students who formed the upper school and it is likely that his influence remained after

he left. He must have been a remarkable man to set his stamp on the school in such a short space of time, developing a code of conduct and behaviour which became a tradition. Dr. B.C. Cohen sums up:

I can make this comparison between Joseph Parsons and F.G. Brown. Brown introduced tone to the school in its beginning. He indicated the right way to carry on, the beginning of a tradition. Joseph Parsons brought drive into the activities. He made things go. He devoted the best part of his life to making the school a success.¹⁶

Whether Brown or Parsons was responsible originally for establishing the ethos at Perth Modern School cannot be decided but it is clear that both headmasters were occupied in developing tone, standards of behaviour, academic success and loyalty to the school. These attributes were admired not only for their own sake but as a means of emulating the prestigious private schools, which in their turn were inspired by the British public schools.

Little information is available today concerning the original staff of Modern School. It would have been a difficult task to find a significant number of suitably qualified secondary teachers in Western Australia in 1911 in the absence of a university. The Saturday morning monitors' classes prepared students for the Adelaide University Senior Examination and eventual entry to Claremont College for a two year course to prepare them for elementary teaching. There

would not have been the time or facilities to prepare teachers with suitable qualifications and experience specifically for the opening of Modern School, but it would seem that most, if not all, came from Perth. The *West Australian* indicates that:

The headmaster himself, as well as the students, was also fortunate in having attached to the school a staff of assistants, most of whom had already won their spurs in the service of the Education Department, and all of whom were specially qualified in one direction or another for the duties they had to undertake.¹⁷

It is most likely that the staff of the Normal School transferred with F.G. Brown to the Modern School and that other teachers were recruited from the staff of Claremont Teachers' College. At least four members of the staff came from Perth Boys' School (an elementary school which held post-primary classes) during this period. T.W. Ellison, C.G. Palmer, W.E. Shelton and F.L.H. Sherlock are all named as staff members in the history of that school.¹⁸ A class of forty monitors attended Perth Modern School for one day a week in its opening year¹⁹ and soon the school was to produce a plentiful supply of its own graduates to swell the ranks of the staff, together with other graduates from the University of Western Australia after it opened in 1913. It is probable, however, that most of the original staff would have been trained as primary teachers, even though teaching at the secondary level.

The secondary courses offered at Perth Modern School in 1911 extended for four years, the first two of which prepared

students for the Junior Examination of the University of Adelaide. The subjects taken were English, French, optional Latin, optional German (though this was discontinued from 1914 for the duration of the war, presumably because of anti-German feeling), Arithmetic, Geometry, Algebra, Physics, Physical Geography, Drawing, Singing, Physical Development, Workshop for boys, Domestic Science for girls and Cadet Training for boys.²⁰ All students took each subject in lower school then entered the upper school for the final two years following successful completion of the Junior Examination. Here they were streamed and originally offered a choice of five special courses: Arts, Science, Education, Commerce or Agriculture. The Arts course was a well-balanced general course, designed to prepare students for entry to university and typically included English, Latin and Greek, or French and German, or Latin and French, or Latin and German, Algebra, Geometry, Physics or Chemistry, History and Civics, Drawing, Workshop or Domestic Science. The 1911 Science course included English, Latin or Greek or French or German, Algebra, Geometry, Trigonometry, Physics, Chemistry, Botany, Physiology, Practical Mathematics, Workshop or Domestic Science and Mechanical Drawing, though some of these were one year courses.²¹ Both course structures demonstrated the influence of Cecil Andrews and his desire for the school to live up to its modern ideals.

The Education course was intended for future teachers and the 1911 intake would have included the students transferred to

Modern School from the Normal School with F.G. Brown. The subjects available were English, French, Theory of Arithmetic, Algebra, Geometry, Physics, Chemistry, Commercial Geography, History and Civics, Drawing, Theory of Education, First Aid, Agriculture (boys only), Botany (girls only), Workshop or Domestic Science. The Commerical course included English, French, German, Commercial Arithmetic, Commercial Geography, Commercial History, Book-keeping, Shorthand, Penmanship, Office Systems and Business Practice. The Agriculture course consisted of English, Agricultural Mathematics (ordinary mensuration and also the measurement of excavations, earthworks, haystacks, silos etc.), Agricultural Chemistry, Agricultural Botany, First Aid, Book-keeping, Forge-work, Workshop and 'Agriculture' which covered theoretical and practical work. The prospectus says 'for the practical work there are to be experimental plots. In every way this course promises to be of great value to the settler'.²² These words sound quaintly nineteenth century and colonial when used to describe a Modern School curriculum.

A number of changes took place in the curriculum during the first few years. The University of Western Australia opened two years after Modern School and commenced public examinations in 1914, making it possible for students to sit for the local Junior and Leaving Certificates. It would have been necessary to adjust the school courses to the requirements of the new university, a process which is still occurring to this day. In

1917 the secondary course was increased to five years, with students spending three years in the lower school general course. There is little mention of the Education course after 1911 and probably it was amalgamated into the Arts course as the Normal School students became absorbed into the new school. The Agricultural course survived to at least 1918 where it is still listed in the school prospectus, but early students recall that it became less and less popular and eventually was discontinued. One or two suggested that the reason was due to the poor soil and lack of a suitable site for the practical work, but it is possible that Joseph Parsons influenced the decision to end the course for his own reasons, which will be discussed in chapter 5.

Several ex-students indicated the low status accorded to the Commercial course, describing the facilities for it as poor. One recalls that it attracted the lower achievers because there was less emphasis on academic study,²³ although this was not always the case. Another ex-student, who was amongst the first intake of women to the Commonwealth Bank and who later received an honorary doctoral degree from Murdoch University describes the problem she encountered with Joseph Parsons when she decided to enrol in the Commercial course in Upper School. She had gained a scholarship to Modern School in 1913 and was 'one of Joey's favourites', thus incurring his grave displeasure when she refused to enter the Arts stream.²⁴ It is interesting to

note that though this course was looked down upon by many of the students it provided a large number of the future senior public servants at the state and commonwealth levels and encouraged a new breed of career women. However, ex-students recall that it was abandoned after only a few years, though none could provide a date or reason. Certainly it had disappeared by 1925, where no mention of it was made in the school prospectus for that year. Possibly the prejudiced view of the commercial course which emerged when old students of the school were interviewed was fostered by Joseph Parsons, which could explain its demise. These commercial subjects were not absorbed into any other streams nor were they replaced by another course.

The nineteenth century concept of culture for its own sake was encouraged by Parsons and probably F.G. Brown before him, as from the outset there were to be no academic prizes awarded at the school. The progressive pedagogy of the New Education supported first by Cyril Jackson and then by Cecil Andrews was to bring a greater emphasis on the learner and less on the learned throughout the state education system, but it is doubtful that the 'modern' approach to the curriculum developed along the lines that Andrews envisaged for Modern School. It is curious that under the headmastership of Parsons the school moved further and further towards the English grammar school model without Andrews interfering, even though he did not retire for another eighteen years after the school opening. This development will be traced in chapter 5.

One feature was mentioned continually by ex-Modern students of these early years: that of co-education. Everyone interviewed considered that it was ahead of its time, though from the present position it could be argued that all West Australian state schools were co-educational then, as they are today. Possibly this attitude developed as Modern School was compared with the private secondary schools of the period, all of which were separate sex schools, rather than with the co-educational state elementary schools. But despite the co-educational description given to Modern School, lower school classes were in fact segregated and separate stairways for boys and girls were maintained. Possibly co-education was adopted purely on economic grounds, for Andrews would have been well aware that the government was not prepared to open two schools to cater for boys and girls separately. Mixed classes were to be found in the upper school where they became necessary due to the smaller number of students, but boys and girls were segregated within the actual classrooms. The Modern School curriculum enabled girls to study physics for the first time for four, and later five, years but this did not extend to chemistry. One ex-student wrote:

H.E. Pearson, Science. Taught us chemistry; admitted no girls to chemistry on the pretext that they disturbed the class - a real handicap to girls wishing to take science courses at the university.²⁵

The fact that Joseph Parsons tolerated such discrimination in the school suggests a certain ambivalence in his attitude to the

education of girls. Several ex-students believed that he did not like the girls, but another recalls that:

He changed my life's thinking by allowing me to study economics. It was very rare for girls to do so in those days, especially in mixed classes. I learned that to gain economic reform there must be political action²⁶

This past scholar, now in her advanced eighties, was to spend her life putting this knowledge into practice in the feminist and peace movements.

Discipline at the school was maintained largely by the students themselves and there was no corporal punishment and no detention, both revolutionary concepts for the time. The system obviously worked well for all past students interviewed agreed that the school ethos promoted a moral code of self-discipline based on the social mores of the period. Students felt privileged to gain entry and were aware of their responsibilities in this progressive school. The school prospectus for each year to 1925 includes these paragraphs under the heading of discipline:

The discipline of the school is of the simplest possible type, being based on a common-sense interpretation of the needs and peculiarities of the average Australian youth.... Effective discipline and control are obtained without any obtrusion of repressive orders. A student soon learns what is required of him, and seldom fails to respond.²⁷

Girls were all called Miss by the teachers and boys were addressed by their surnames by staff and students. Prefects were appointed from both sexes and there was a Head Boy and Head Girl elected each year. It is likely that all these traditions were instituted by F.G. Brown and maintained by Joseph Parsons, but Parsons added one of his own, that of senior students being made responsible for junior students. From this distance it is not clear exactly how the system worked: some ex-students speak warmly of the caring involved with a senior tending to the needs of a specific junior and some formed friendships which endured beyond schooldays. Others found the system a trial, while one was adamant that it was nothing but a 'fag' system.²⁸ It is unknown when this Arnoldian tradition was introduced as it is not documented in the school magazine or elsewhere but Joseph Parsons brought back the concept with him from the United Kingdom following his study leave in 1914. He includes this paragraph in his 1915 Report to the Director of Education following his return:

The custom of affiliation of Juniors deserves special mention. Every Junior in a House is selected by a Senior of the same sex of the same House. Thus there grows up a small army of Juniors emulating their Seniors and ready to replace them when the time comes. The Senior introduces his Junior to the House, instructs him as to school rules, traditions, manners, colours, costume, trophies, work, report books etc., encourages and coaches him in games and work and supervises his conduct, while the Junior in return assists his Senior in his School House offices, gives personal help, e.g. scouts at games, carries messages etc. and reports to his Senior when he has been in disgrace or earned merit of any sort.²⁹

One of the first tasks undertaken by Parsons after his appointment was an application to the Secondary Schools' Association for membership by Modern School. This Association consisted of the leading private secondary schools in Western Australia and admission to it would have enabled Perth Modern School to compete in inter-school sports events. The first application for membership had been made by F.G. Brown within a few months of the opening of Modern School, which had been refused, probably as the result of the private school headmasters' disapproval of the new state secondary school. They already perceived the school to be a threatening academic competitor and needed to prevent it from becoming a major sports competitor as well, though Bradshaw suggests that the refusal was the result of Brown's tactless handling of the application.³⁰ Unfortunately for Perth Modern School, F.C. Faulkner of Perth High School was still the president of the Association and he wrote the following curt handwritten letter in reply to the second application:

In reply to your letter of the 3rd ult: I have to inform you that a meeting of my Association was held on Monday last when it was again decided not to admit Perth Modern School.³¹

Bradshaw, an ex-Perth Modern School student, may be correct in his assertion that Brown was tactless in his dealings with the Association, but though this could have been a contributing factor for the rejection of these applications it was not the sole reason. No doubt Faulkner still suffered a certain amount

of pique from his brush with Cecil Andrews four years earlier, but a report in the *West Australian* reveals strong motives not only for this rejection but for the private school attitudes which were to remain for many years:

At the annual dinner of the Scotch College Old Boys' Association, on Friday evening, reference was made by the principal of the College, Mr. P.C. Anderson, M.A., to the attitude adopted by three of the associated public schools towards the Perth Modern School.

He said that the secondary schools had been accused of being snobbish in excluding the Modern School from the membership of the Secondary Schools' Association, and in their refusing to meet it in sports. Those who knew him knew that he was not a snob so far as sport was concerned. He would play a game with the man who played it, no matter what the game was. The attitude of the associated secondary schools towards the Perth Modern School was a very positive one. The Scotch College was a self-supporting community. If it wanted a gymnasium it had to pay for it. Its gymnasium cost £400 - that had to be met out of revenue. They had to pay for the levelling of the cricket ground - and that cost \$400 - and for the erection of the first wing of the college at a cost of £2000... The Modern School had merely to crack its fingers to the Public Works Department - it wanted a new gymnasium - and lo and behold the Department sprang a gymnasium... The other secondary schools could not compete against that sort of thing. He was perfectly willing to play the Modern School at sport, at any sport it liked, provided the Government recognised the work which the other schools had done.... unless the Government was prepared to recognise what the schools had done, he would say to Modern School: 'We are not prepared to recognise you'. Was not that fair? Certainly, it was fair. (Applause) It was a matter of vital importance to the secondary schools.32

Anderson was concerned about the financial repercussions for Scotch College if Modern School, with its up-to-date resources, was to be allowed to join the Association. The private schools

took pride in their sporting achievements and the headmasters knew that success on the playing fields encouraged school enrolments. Already their financial positions were threatened by the presence of Modern School, which had taken many of the government secondary school scholarship grants from them and was achieving a high standard of academic excellence. Further erosion of the private schools could be expected if the new state secondary school joined the Association and was given the opportunity to dominate the secondary schools sports meetings, a likely outcome, for Modern School was attracting a group of highly selected and talented students who could be expected to make the most of the latest sporting equipment and training that the Education Department provided. This newspaper cutting was discovered in the office of the present principal of Modern School attached to a sheet of paper in Parson's handwriting. Perhaps he kept it for the rest of his headmastership to remind him of the struggle for acceptance in the early days.

A further application for membership of the Association was made by Parsons in October 1917 to the new President, the Rev. Bro. M.P. Noonan, headmaster of the Christian Brothers' College and the successor of Bro. Lynch. It was again rejected, but this time the real reasons were brought out into the open:

The great objection to the admission of your school into our association is that we should have to compete in sport on unequal terms giving your school in every case a big advantage over us.

If you could get the authorities that control your school to come into line with us (a) on the fee question (b) on the method of admission and (c) on

the scholarship question we would then have no grounds for complaint and I believe your application would be successful.³³

This letter was forwarded by Parsons to Cecil Andrews and correspondence carried over into 1918, ending in a final letter to Parsons from the Association, now called the Public Schools Sports Association, once again refusing his request. The reasons remain the same as those given previously, but in addition is included the notion that:

A school of boys and girls, departmentally controlled, with no responsibility to any Board of Governors or Council cannot be considered a Public School as the term is understood in the scholastic world.³⁴

The Association makes it clear that it expects the matter to be laid to rest, saying:

Your request and the reasons which you embodied were carefully considered and after lengthy discussion it was unanimously resolved that your request cannot be entertained.³⁵

This letter was signed individually by all four headmasters from the participating schools. Perhaps they did not feel comfortable about their decision for it was taken on 24 November 1917 but they did not inform Parsons of it until the end of February 1918, so avoiding the issue for the 1917 sports competition which was held at the end of the year.³⁶

The Education Department granted Parsons long service leave in the latter part of 1914, which he spent in the United

Kingdom. While there he visited schools in England and Scotland and on his return submitted a report on his findings to Cecil Andrews. It was fortunate that this mission was accomplished before the worst days of the Great War, for some of Parson's most successful innovations were based on what he had seen in the several schools that he visited. As a direct result of the churlish attitude of the denominational schools in denying Modern School the opportunity to participate in its sporting competitions Parsons introduced the house system. He had seen it in action in all the secondary schools he visited in Britain and he wrote:

In some schools I found a great many activities falling under the aegis of the house, as for example the organization and conduct of sport, the holding of social gatherings, the introduction of new pupils to their school work, the development of hobby work, the collection of funds for charitable objects, the conduct of the school magazine, etc. ³⁷

Parsons realised that the house system was the solution to his problem of providing sporting competition at Modern School saying:

It can easily be seen that apart from any other advantage the House System would offer the Modern School that incentive of inter House competition in sport that is very necessary, while the other Boys' Secondary Schools of Perth fail to recognise the Modern School as one of themselves and fail to afford it those facilities for inter-school competition that is really needed to keep sport alive. ³⁸

In August 1915 the student body of Perth Modern School was divided into four groups, which were called factions: Red, Blue, Gold (the school colours) and Sphinx (the school emblem) which was green. Inter-faction sports activities soon became a regular feature of the curriculum. Never again was Perth Modern School to apply for membership of the Public Schools Sports Association: the faction system thrived and the idea was passed on to the new states secondary schools which emerged in the following decades. The private schools did a favour to state school education by their refusal to associate with Modern School for the results of Parsons' successful innovation of the faction system can be seen today in every state secondary school and most state primary schools in Western Australia.

Another innovation instituted by Joseph Parsons on his return from long service leave was an extension of the Form Master system. Lower School Form Masters were already in existence, but he was impressed by their function in British schools where they were 'not only interested in the subject they taught but in the moral upbringing of pupils in their care'.³⁹ Form Masters were now introduced throughout the school to 'lead to a system of delegated authority which makes a master feel his responsibility for the progress of his form'.⁴⁰

Parsons informed Cecil Andrews that in Britain he 'found few schools where it was the practice to hold staff meetings as we do' and 'I found nothing so fine as our hall in any of the

schools I visited'.⁴¹ He lamented the lack of science buildings and equipment at Modern School, but reports that only in one school did he see as good work being done in manual training as in the Modern School workshop. He visited Whitgift Grammar School to observe Latin teaching by Direct Method, which eliminated the drudgery of grammar lessons in language teaching, but he acknowledged that it would be impossible to introduce it at Modern School 'for want of expert teachers'.⁴² He was impressed that the English child participated more in the modern languages lessons than the average child at his school.

While the private schools shunned Modern School the general community attitude became one of approval. It was considered to be a great privilege to gain a scholarship to the school and it developed rapidly into a respected institution in its own right and a viable alternative to the denominational schools.⁴³ The *West Australian* encouraged considerable community support in a long article describing the official opening ceremony of Perth Modern School:

An epoch of considerable importance in the history of state education in Western Australia was marked yesterday by the official opening by his Excellency the Governor, Sir Gerald Strickland, of the Perth Modern School. The magnificent assembly hall, which is a prominent feature of an altogether striking building, was packed to the doors with the parents of scholars, friends and others interested in the institution...⁴⁴

Details were given of the cost of the school and the proposed curriculum and the Governor said:

he joined with pleasure in bearing witness to the important step which the Government had taken to promote the interests of education in Western Australia by the completion of that magnificent building and by framing the educational system which it was proposed should be taught in it. It seemed that the school had already justified its existence, if indeed justification was necessary, by the fact that the accommodation had already been largely oversubscribed...⁴⁵

Full descriptions were given of the speeches made by Cecil Andrews and F.G.Brown. This is surprisingly enthusiastic considering the attitude of the paper three years earlier and the fact that J. Winthrop Hackett had not succeeded in his desire to see a university open in Perth before the establishment of a state secondary school. The following week the language becomes more guarded, however:

The opening last week of the Perth Modern School, together with other educational advancements in the state, tends to make complete the educational system in Western Australia.⁴⁶

Ex-students recall that the private schools were forced to prepare students for the Modern School scholarship examination under pressure from parents and several of the winners amongst them elected to go to Perth Modern School even though their families could afford the private secondary school fees, indicating the measure of community confidence in the school. An interesting insight was obtained from one ex-student who maintains that the private schools did not have the staff or standards of Modern School at that time, though this might be a biased view. She considered herself most fortunate to have

been 'rescued' from a country school in Albany by Parsons and brought to Perth to board and attend Modern School on a scholarship. Until then the only destiny for an intelligent woman, particularly in the country, had been elementary school teaching or marriage, but so many prospective husbands of her generation were lost in the Great War that she estimated that four fifths of the girls from her year never married, but went into the professions now open to them through their education and led stimulating and successful single lives.⁴⁷ Another woman described the girls from Methodist Ladies' College, Presbyterian Ladies' College and the Anglican schools as very snobbish towards the Modern School girls: 'they considered us to be the lowest of the low'⁴⁸, a recollection which possibly implies that state schools of all types were held in low regard by the private schools and reinforces the reputation for social distinction which the private schools gained during the controversy surrounding the establishment of Perth Modern School.

A picture emerges from the West Australian Education Department files of proud parents who were anxious to obtain an education for their children which was not available to them. The courses were career oriented and it would seem that most parents were satisfied with them. Entry to the school was sought eagerly and fierce competition existed for the one hundred scholarship places offered each year. Despite the population growth this number did not increase for the forty-six

years that it remained a selective school. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that some elementary schools began coaching above-average students specifically for the scholarship examination. Eventually, following complaints from the Teachers' Union, the Education Department issued instructions that headmasters were to ensure that:

1. No special scholarship classes were to be formed
2. No training aimed at winning scholarships was to be given⁴⁹

The Union conducted a survey in 1941 of the previous years of 'misfits', who were those that left Modern School before the end of their third year of secondary education. It claimed that 40% of them came from four metropolitan primary schools which had established a reputation for winning scholarships.⁵⁰ It would seem that while academic advantage was gained for the primary schools concerned it was not to the advantage of Modern School for teachers to offer special coaching.

Joseph Parsons returned from Europe in 1915, having seen the effects of the early days of the war. It would not be long before the cream of his boys enlisted and twenty-four were to lose their lives in battle, including three former school captains. Watts notes how deeply moved Parsons was by the deaths of these young men, showed clearly by the notations in his personal copies of the school magazine:

Amongst those who died were two boys of whom Parsons seems to have been particularly fond - John Shaw Anderson and Marshall Tregellis Fox. Their names are written over and over as if Parsons, sitting at his desk looking out over the school oval, remembering all that passed between them, was

trying to come to grips with their sacrifice and the futility of war.⁵¹

Several students who were at the school during this period recalled the growing sense of unity which they felt as each death was announced in the school hall at assembly time. The school ethos and sense of patriotic commitment to ideals was to develop during this time of tragedy.

NOTES

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31. F C Faulkner to Joseph Parsons, 1 Nov.1912. Letter held in principal's office, PMS (uncatalogued)
32. *West Australian*, 22 Dec.1913
33. Quoted in letter from Joseph Parsons to the Director of Education on 29 October 1917. Held in principal's office PMS (uncatalogued)
34. Letter from the Secondary Schools Athletics Association to Joseph Parsons dated 25 Feb. 1918 and signed by:

M W Ward, (chairman)
John Warden, The High School, Perth
P C Anderson, Scotch College

P U Henn, Guildford Grammar School
Letter held in principal's office, PMS (uncatalogued)

35. Ibid
36. Ibid
37. Parsons, Jan. 1915, p.21
38. Ibid, p.22
39. Ibid, p.18
40. EDF 4022/15
41. Parsons, Jan. 1915, p.29 and p.34
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43. WAED Report for 1914, WAVP 1915, Vol.1, p.1
44. *West Australian*, 1 March 1911
45. Ibid
46. *West Australian*, 10 March 1911
47. Personal communication from Irene Greenwood, Nov. 1983
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Chapter 4

By the end of World War I Perth Modern School had established a reputation for academic excellence, which, in its way, was just as exclusive as the most expensive of the private schools in Perth. The question of elitism created by a strong emphasis on academic excellence at the school will be discussed in chapter 5, but it is necessary here, however, to examine briefly Cecil Andrews' motives during his twenty-six years as administrative head of the Education Department in Western Australia. The reputation which Perth Modern School gained for elitism continued for many years during his administration, while the other state high schools that he established during this period were recognised as being egalitarian institutions. Was it his aim that Perth Modern School should challenge and defeat the private school lobby? If this was his intention, why did he consider that it was necessary? The answers may lie in his own background and attitude to teacher training. As we have seen, Andrews came from a humble and financially deprived background, but was able to fight his way up the academic and social ladder by means of scholarships which enabled him to attend both a prestigious British public school and Oxford University. The result of nineteenth century education in such circumstances led in one of two directions: either the recipient attempted to cross the British class barriers and settled into

the conservative mould or he followed the opposite route and championed the cause of egalitarian ideals. Although there is no documentary evidence to prove that Andrews took the latter path it would seem that he did so when his achievements are examined.

Why did Andrews choose to come to Australia? The British upper class would have looked down upon it because it was a colony and to the class conscious society of the day the prospect of pioneering in the 'white dominions' would not have been as enticing as achieving the same results in England. But the colonies held out inviting prospects for those who were ambitious, but who did not belong by birth to the ruling British upper class. Careers similar to the Western Australian appointment afforded the means of obtaining a more senior position than would have been possible at home. Andrews would have succeeded in an educational career in England for he was a man of very considerable ability, but it is doubtful that he would have reached the status of Director of Education and certainly not in the space of the two years it took to achieve the position in Western Australia. We know that he refused the appointment as foundation principal of Claremont Teachers' College when an offer was made to him because the salary was inadequate, but he accepted it after Cyril Jackson promised that he could expect to succeed him as Inspector-General within a few years.' So Andrews would have been aware of this prospect of rapid advancement when he made the decision to come to Western

Australia. No evidence exists to support or refute this claim, however, though Andrews, having given the best of his life's work in the service of the Western Australian Education Department, chose to return to England to retire. There may have been many reasons for this, of course, but it could perhaps throw light on his attitude: despite three decades of living in Perth and becoming involved in the community as a highly respected and influential senior public servant he appeared to consider himself an Englishman rather than an Australian immigrant and returned to the mother country to find his roots in a long retirement.

The chronicle of Andrews' educational improvements from 1901 to 1909 demonstrates that his main aim was to improve the quality of students entering Claremont Teachers' College, very few of whom came from the private secondary schools and who therefore had received no post-elementary education. Firstly, together with Cyril Jackson, he founded the special classes for monitors in Perth and Fremantle in 1901. These were designed to improve their general education and theoretical knowledge of teaching before the Teachers' College opened in 1902. Then he opened the Normal School in 1907, which in practice became a secondary school for intending teachers. Two years later he converted eight of the largest elementary schools into central schools where a form of secondary education was offered by the addition of Standard Seven classes. Six of these schools were in the Perth metropolitan area and one each at Kalgoorlie and

Boulder. The inclusion of the two schools from the Goldfields could be seen as politically motivated, with the main support for the Labor Party coming from this area. F.G. Brown, who at the time was still headmaster of the Normal School, deplored this innovation, complaining that the central schools were luring prospective teachers away from the profession:

The result of the institution of the Central Schools is making itself felt in our supplies of raw materials. Our last batch of new students was not up to previous standards, neither in physique nor in mental attainments. It is not to be wondered at that the promising youths in a big school should be tempted to fit themselves for earning an immediate wage, however meagre, in any profession or trade other than that of teacher. In spite of very generous conditions as to books, fares, and the cost of living, the trainee has to wait at least five years before he can feel that he is becoming financially independent.²

Despite some opposition it can be seen that by developing as many varying institutions as possible Andrews was determined to raise the level of post-elementary scholarship in order to improve the entry qualifications of students to Claremont Teachers' College. Once Perth Modern School opened Andrews was assured of a steady flow of competent intending teachers both for the College and for the new University of Western Australia when it opened. The fact that this was his intention is demonstrated by the closure of the Normal School and the transfer of its entire student body to Perth Modern School. It was by these means that he broke away from the mould of the classical curriculum, challenging the private school lobby and

its exclusive hold on the education of the future leaders of Western Australian society.

Cecil Andrews had discarded the proposal that secondary education could be offered by expanding the private schools with the aid of government subsidies in return for the offer of free places for state scholarship students. He was uneasy that the private schools would be free to co-operate or not as they pleased, but of even greater concern was the probability that this would lead to opening of old wounds on the subject of state aid to denominational schools and the problems of Education Department inspection of the grant-aided schools. Furthermore, such a scheme would not solve the problem of secondary education in country areas. The success of Perth Modern School and its inability to cope with all the students who qualified for entry made the expansion of the state secondary system an urgent matter. Increasing numbers were attending Modern School from country areas (see Appendix 1), but Andrews was hampered once again by lack of finance. The metropolitan area needed another high school, but it was imperative that state secondary education should be taken to country areas. Funds were not available to open two new state secondary schools, so Andrews, now with the new title of Director of Education, did the best that he could in the circumstances. It was politically expedient to establish a high school in the Kalgoorlie/Boulder region in recognition of the support given by mining communities to the landslide victory of the Scaddan Labor government and,

accordingly, the Eastern Goldfields High School was opened in 1914. In 1915 Andrews upgraded the central schools, adding a third year to the courses and including professional subjects, such as commerce, to the existing vocational curriculum.³ This was the best solution he could offer during the economic stringency of war-time conditions, but the inability to provide a second state secondary school in Perth further confirmed Modern School's ever-growing reputation as an elitist institution. The egalitarian Andrews would not have been happy with this development.

Three more country high schools were to follow during Andrews' term of office: Northam in 1921, Bunbury in 1922 and Albany in 1925. Perth Modern School became the model for them all. The faction system was introduced to promote sporting competition, the 'modern' curriculum was adopted and the Modern School tradition of self-discipline was assimilated into the new schools. The links between Perth Modern School and the country high schools strengthened as the years went by: Modern School supplied many of the teachers for the high schools, both from the ranks of its staff and from its ex-students, and Joseph Parsons' influence extended throughout the state as he visited the schools in his role as inspector of state secondary schools, an additional position to which he was appointed in 1922.

The expenditure of the Education Department increased steadily as the state secondary education system expanded.

When Perth Modern School opened in 1911 the education budget exceeded £200,000 for the first time⁴, of which it was estimated that £3,000 would be required to maintain the school at its current level of enrolment.⁵ By 1920 the total expenditure on education had doubled,⁶ largely because Andrews had supported the Teachers' Union in its struggle with the government over salary claims and resisted consistently suggestions of cutbacks to the educational budget which had been proposed by members of all political parties. Mounting public concern over expenditure came to a head in 1920 when Andrews' administration was criticised in the Western Australian Parliament by the leader of the state Labor Opposition, Phillip Collier. It was recognised that the cost of education would rise even higher following the granting of salary increments to teachers and in May 1921 the Governor announced the appointment of a Royal Commission on Education to be headed by Peter Board, the Director of Education in New South Wales. The Minister for Education described the Commission as one which would 'inquire into and report upon the system of public elementary and secondary education in the state of Western Australia, and the administration of the Acts relating thereto'.⁷ He defined the questions to be addressed as:

1. Is the State obtaining value for its expenditure on education?
2. Can the system be improved upon, and if so, in what way, to make it more fitted to the requirements of the State?
3. Can the schools in the rural districts be made more useful to the settlers?
4. Are there extravagances, defects or deficiencies in the system followed that can be remedied?

5. Is the administration defective, and if so, in what particulars?⁸

Cecil Andrews was examined on the first day of the hearings and he presented a vigorous defence of the work of the Education Department. When questioned on secondary education he said that 'unfortunately the Perth Modern School was not nearly large enough to take all who wished to enter that school'.⁹ The Inspectors were called on the second day and the inquiry appears to have attracted considerable community interest with daily reports of the proceedings appearing in the *West Australian*, together with letters to the newspaper from members of the public. The Commission's Report was tabled in Parliament in 1922.¹⁰ Andrews was completely vindicated and the expenditure on education in Western Australia was seen to be responsible. The Commissioners reported that:

In general terms the Commission has arrived at the conclusion that the expenditure on education in the State is justified. Improvements and modifications are suggested in various directions, both to ensure that full value for expenditure is secured, and to make the provision of education more effective. The Commission has dealt with the question of rural schools, and throughout the report as well as in the section devoted to this subject, has kept in view the needs of the rural population. The Commission is further of the opinion that while the administration of any large department of State affecting the interests of large numbers of people is liable to criticism from various points of view, the education system of this State is capably administered.¹¹

The Commissioners concluded that no further cuts could be made in educational expenditure without compromising the quality of state education. Mossenson sums up the findings and draws attention to the fact that:

the soundness of Andrews's administration received something of the recognition it deserved, the report was not a face-saving device but a searching review of Western Australian education, including those aspects in which elaboration might be expected once the public finances had improved. Apart from the necessary if negative virtue of silencing ill-conceived criticism of the Education Department and its director, the Royal Commission's report was a useful guide for the future.¹²

Criticism has been levelled that by 1921 Perth Modern School had become an institution pre-occupied with examination results: this will be discussed in chapter 5. However, the success of the school made the community aware of the importance of post-primary education and emphasised the need for more state secondary schools, but it is probable that the new rural high schools were closer to Andrews' original egalitarian aims for Modern School.

Cecil Andrews retired in 1929. He had established the continuity in educational planning which was lacking before his arrival and revolutionised the state school system, instituting free education from primary to tertiary levels despite the fluctuating conditions of the Western Australian economy during his term of office. As the architect of the state secondary education system he had seen Perth Modern School become an

elitist institution, but four country high schools remained as monuments to his egalitarian ideals. Mossenson says that:

during the eighteen years from the foundation of Modern School until his retirement, the number of pupils older than fourteen years in government schools rose above 300 percent, whereas the general increase in enrolments for the period was no more than sixty per cent.¹³

He remains the longest serving Director of Education in Western Australia.

NOTES

1. Garratt, E, 'Cecil Rollo Paton Andrews - First Director of Education', in Fletcher, Laadan (ed), *Pioneers of Education in Western Australia*, UWAP, Nedlands, 1982, p.223
2. Ibid p.239
3. Mossenson, David, *State Education in Western Australia: 1829-1960*, UWAP, Nedlands, 1972, p.112
4. WAPV 1910-1911, PP 2, p.89
5. WAPV 1921, Vol.1 No.5, p.2
6. *West Australian*, 1 March 1911
7. Ibid, 12 May 1921
8. Ibid
9. Ibid, 31 May 1921
10. WAPV 1922-1923, Vol.1 No.1, p.14
11. *West Australian*, 27 July 1921

Chapter 5

Joseph Parsons devoted twenty seven-years of his working life to Perth Modern School and continued to watch over it until his death. He had begun his teaching career in Sydney at the Fort Street Model School and had been brought to Western Australia as one of a group of promising recruits to the state education system by Cyril Jackson in 1899. He had already gained a B.A. with first class honours in French and Latin at Sydney University and was to return there in 1903 during the holidays to obtain an M.A., which made him the highest qualified teacher in Western Australia.¹ He rose rapidly in the ranks during his twelve years in the west before he became headmaster of Modern School. His first appointment was to the staff of Perth Boys' School, but soon afterwards he was appointed headmaster of Boulder School on the Goldfields. He then returned to Claremont Teachers' College but spent only a year there before resigning. He did not give public reasons for doing so, but Watts suggests that either the College offered little prospect for his advancement, his way being blocked by two teachers more senior than himself who had been recruited from the east at the same time as he, or he was unhappy with his salary.² Whatever the reason, he begged Cecil Andrews to allow him to return to the classroom and consequently retraced his steps to the Goldfields, this time as headmaster of Coolgardie School. In 1904 Andrews brought him back to Perth as Instructor

of Monitors classes and in 1905 he was appointed headmaster of Perth Boys' School. His rise had been meteoric as he was still only twenty-eight years old. After several unsuccessful applications during the following years Parsons was appointed an inspector in 1911 and despatched the following year to the Goldfields again, this time as the Kalgoorlie District Inspector. He had hardly arrived before he was called back urgently to Perth: F.G. Brown had resigned and Joseph Parsons was offered the position as his replacement at Modern School. He accepted and so began his long association with the school in October 1912 when he was thirty-six years old.

The official views of Joseph Parsons, the educator, are well documented by Watts. He was a distinguished scholar, possessing a strong sense of commitment both to his students and to education. He was a progressive with a fine teaching ability, a strong disciplinarian, but one who understood the needs of young people. He became one of the leading headmasters in Australia, providing inspiration to thousands of students who passed through his hands and went on to make their mark in cultural, scientific, political, social and commercial fields. The list of eminent Old Modernians who have acknowledged that they were influenced by Parsons during his headmastership is extensive and includes doctors, lawyers, dentists, scientists, engineers, academics, schoolteachers, politicians, public servants, high ranking members of the armed services, businessmen, social workers, agriculturalists,

creative writers, journalists and musicians. By far the greater proportion of these were men, for as Irene Greenwood suggests 'perhaps because women lost their identity on marriage, or failed to retain their professional names, it is not easy to trace them among 'Old Mod girls'.³ She also gives some insight into Joseph Parsons' priorities, saying:

He, I am certain, (for I went to PMS the same year as he did and knew him well) would have placed the educators and the creative writers in the top rank, followed probably by the doctors and surgeons, the surveyors and engineers, and then the scientists, and the company directors and business executives lower down.⁴

A short list of some of the distinguished Old Modernians from the first ten years of the school intakes is included in the Appendix. Its brevity is explained by the loss of many ex-students in the First World War. Watts describes Parsons' grief and suffering at the death of so many of these promising young men:

As each death in battle was notified to the school the sense of unity among the students increased and Parsons' personal anguish grew more intense. The notations in his private copies of *The Sphinx* published during the war show clearly how deeply moved he was by the deaths of his young men.⁵

Cecil Andrews was to acknowledge these losses in his Report to the Minister for Education in 1918:

The loss of so many of our best specimens of manhood, who might have taken leading parts in the life of the State, makes more apparent than ever the necessity of providing the best possible education for the rising generation.⁶

Joseph Parsons, the man, remains something of an enigma, a mystery which deepened during many discussions with some of his old students. Their purely academic assessments of him generally, but not always, agreed, but their personal experiences and perceptions of him covered a wide range of views. Some believed that he was not a progressive educator at all, but presided over a 'modern' curriculum which was taught in the traditional manner. At least three people described him as 'a snob', while others criticised his administrative abilities. One ex-student remembers him as:

Taciturn, brusque, with a rather formidable exterior, a kind of benevolent despot, very autocratic on matters of education, yet within he had a streak of sentimentality and kindness although unable to suffer fools gladly.⁷

In general a picture emerged of a headmaster who was highly respected, even by those who disliked him, though it seems that these students were in the minority. Very few people could give a picture of the man, who seems to have remained somewhat aloof. He was sarcastic and feared by those in trouble, but knew everyone in the school and was keenly interested in their welfare. Several people recalled that he was unable to disguise the fact that certain students were his favourites. All agreed, however, that his love and service to the school and

its welfare was the guiding force in his life. It has been suggested that he was a shy man, which could account for a certain lack of warmth which some of these subjective biographical sketches seem to suggest.

The fact that Perth Modern School quickly became an elitist institution is not disputed today. Criticism levelled at it includes objections to the manner in which the school took the academic cream, processed it and produced even more refined cream at the end of five years. Some believe that the school became a spawning ground for the leading families to tighten their control of the professions and commerce and industry in Perth, while others were upset by what they saw to be a breakdown in the teaching of the modern curriculum. These objections are reasonable but should be considered within their context: Joseph Parsons was educating the most gifted children in Western Australia at a school which was recognised as being one of the best in the country. The highly selective nature of the qualifying entry examination inevitably led to the creation of an academic elite who filled the scholarship places each year, while the lack of spending on education during the Depression years, exacerbated by a downturn in the economy, led to even more fierce competition for places, particularly in the absence of a second state secondary school in Perth. Furthermore, the secondary schools were dominated by the requirements of the Public Examinations Board and the prerequisites for tertiary admission, as they still are today.

Originally entrance to Perth Modern School was open to all who had passed the Junior Certificate examination and who could pay the annual fees, as discussed in chapter 3. By 1913 the Qualifying Examinations were introduced, due to the increasing numbers wishing to be admitted each year and fierce competition for places caused the selection procedure to become more and more intense. The Education Department continued this policy of maintaining Perth Modern School as a selective high school for the academic elite for forty-five years, despite the opening of new high schools in both the metropolitan and country areas. Therefore it is unfair to lay the blame for the increasing academic elitism at Joseph Parsons' door, but he must be held responsible for some of the attitudes which developed at Modern School during his tenure as headmaster. The school moved further and further towards the English grammar school model under Parsons. Teachers wore gowns to assembly and sport became increasingly important. Sports Day was held each October and became a big social occasion, with elaborate trophy awarding ceremonies. These were confined to the boys only, the girls having to be content with the role of spectator and the wearing of their best dresses.²⁰ Several ex-students expressed their disappointment that so much emphasis was placed on awards for sporting prowess while academic honour was to be achieved for its own reward and the glory of the school.

The adoption of the Modern School motto 'Savoir c'est Pouvoir' (Knowledge is Power) in French rather than Latin was

designed to emphasise the original intention of a move away from the classical curriculum and yet it was not long before Parsons was offering lunchtime Greek lessons to deserving classical scholars as he progressed with his own self-taught study of that language.⁹ Soon afterwards the Modern School song appeared in Latin:

Moderna Scola, te amamus
O sodales, concinamus
Nostra scola, scola alma,
Semper gloriam petamus,
Nostra scola, scola alma
Semper gloriam petamus

It was written by a student and is very reminiscent of the English public school songs. This was sung quite frequently at the school and still receives a rousing chorus each year when the Old Modernians meet.

The closure of the early agricultural course and then the commercial course, the introduction of the house or faction system, extension of the form-master system and the inclusion of the concept close to the 'fag' system as described in chapter 3 can be seen as a drift further away from the 'modern' image and a step closer to the English grammar school or public school under Parsons' leadership. John Wheeldon, an old scholar who became a Labor senator was to say that its atmosphere was authoritarian and the school became a showcase for the intellectually competitive:

Mod was an exam factory. It was good for kids who were willing to knuckle down to the system, who were highly motivated. A lot of kids were there from very poor families. Doing well at Mod was their passport into the middle class.¹⁰

An article appeared in the *West Australian* in 1960 in which H.B. Laing, an ex-student who was to be associated with education in Western Australia for sixty years wrote of this early period:

It (Modern School) had a certain pride, not always gracefully concealed, in its examination successes. Its rigid exclusiveness on the academic side probably created an average level of scholarship rarely achieved in schools.¹¹

It is easy to criticise from this distance, but it should be recorded that the school produced outstanding results from such a small population, made even more remarkable when it is remembered that Modern School was isolated not only by distance from all other states but also within Western Australia: there were no other state secondary schools in Perth and the private schools continued to shun it.

One question remains unanswered: why did Joseph Parsons stay so long at Modern School? He was an ambitious man and could have been expected to seek promotion either within the administration of the Western Australian Education Department or elsewhere in Australia. Certainly his experience and qualifications would have allowed him to do so. Watts suggests that he gained a great deal of pleasure and satisfaction from

his headmastership.¹² Possibly he preferred to remain somewhat isolated at Modern School: the Education Department files reveal a series of disagreements with the departmental administration officers, mainly over his salary in his several appointments and perhaps he did not wish to leave his niche at Modern School to join this administration.

Joseph Parsons retired in 1939 leaving the school he loved to face the rigours of the second World War without him. He continued to visit his old haunts and to talk to students, but lost his zest for life when his son was killed in action. He died in 1951, leaving a letter with his will and a bequest on the death of his wife to the Modern School library. It was this letter, opened after his death, which perhaps best sums up his feelings: in it he called Perth Modern School 'our dearest child'. (see Appendix 3).

The private schools had feared that Perth Modern School would compete against them successfully, recognising the possibility that the new state secondary school would threaten their position by recruiting newcomers to generate a new social power structure. Possibly this is why they fought so ferociously against the establishment of the school and why they kept their distance from it after they lost the battle. A glance at a list of Old Modernians establishes the fact that the products of Perth Modern School became eligible for entry into the wealthy elite through their association with the school.

The school provided a bridge to the university for upwardly mobile groups from the elementary schools, including many to whom the private schools would have been unavailable. It produced future medical, legal, political, commercial and social leaders instilled with the social mores of the period and a strong sense of self-discipline, taught by example by Joseph Parsons. It also generated a new social elite as it rivalled the prestigious independent schools, stimulating public interest in secondary education and emphasising the need for more state high schools, for which it became the model. The place of Perth Modern School in the history of education in Western Australia is unique.

NOTES

1. Watts, 1982, p.291
2. Ibid, p.290
3. *West Australian*, 20 Nov.1973
4. Ibid
5. Watts, 1982, pp.301-302
6. WAVP 1919, Vol.1 No.6, p.11
7. Cohen, B C, *Address at the unveiling of a photograph and plaque to Joseph Parsons in the library of Perth Modern School*, PMSA, 30 July 1961
8. Personal communication from Ethel Rourke, Nov. 1982
9. Personal communication from George Burvill, June 1982
10. d'Alpulget, Blanche, *Robert J. Hawke*, Schwartz, Melbourne, 1982

11. *West Australian*, 3 March 1960
12. Watts, 1982, p.303

APPENDIX 1

COUNTRY STUDENTS

How far the school supplies the needs of country scholars, the accompanying table will show. It shows the centres of population in Western Australia and the number from each of these in the various years attending the school on the day of opening in 1917:-

Table of Country Students, 6th February, 1917

| Total | I | II | III | IV |
|------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|----|
| | 107 | 112 | 112 | 84 |
| Albany | 14 | 5 | 5 | 1 |
| Bridgetown | 2 | 1 | - | - |
| Bunbury | 1 | - | 1 | - |
| Collie | 1 | - | 1 | - |
| Geraldton | 5 | 3 | 2 | 2 |
| Kalgoorlie | 1 | 1 | - | 1 |
| Katanning | 1 | - | 1 | - |
| Narrogin | 1 | - | - | - |
| Northam | 4 | 2 | - | - |
| Pingelly | 2 | - | - | 1 |
| Wagin | - | 1 | 2 | 1 |
| York | 1 | - | - | - |
| Smaller Agricultural Centres | 6 | 4 | 4 | 3 |
| Other Mining Fields | 4 | 2 | 2 | 3 |
| Timber Towns | - | 1 | - | 1 |
| Sub-Metropolitan | 3 | 4 | 2 | 3 |
| Total | 46 | 25 | 19 | 18 |
| Percentage | 43 | 22 | 17 | 21 |

Source: WAED Report for 1916, p.66

APPENDIX 2

SHORT LIST OF SOME DISTINGUISHED OLD MODERNIANS FROM THE YEARS
1911-1921

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| Herzel (Bill) Baker | Journalist |
| J. (Jock) Campbell | Leading educationist |
| B.C. Cohen | Specialist medical practitioner |
| J.K. Ewers | Author and teacher |
| John Filmer | Chief Veterinary Officer for New Zealand |
| Irene Greenwood | Feminist and peace activist |
| Brian Horrigan | Commissioner of Railways, Western Australia |
| H.J. Thyer | Brigadier, Australian Army |
| Clarrie Menagh | Journalist |
| Nita Pannell | Actress |
| Stanley Read | General Manager, Commonwealth Bank, Western Australia |
| T.L. Robertson | Director-General of Education, Western Australian Education Department |
| Enid Russell | First woman to qualify as a Bachelor of Laws at the University of Western Australia |
| Noel Sampson | Third headmaster of Perth Modern School |
| Sir Walter Scott | Prominent in the field of industrial management |
| Donald Stewart | Conservator of Forests, Western Australia |
| Eric Underwood | Agricultural scientist, Emeritus Professor at the University of Western Australia |
| Malcolm Uren | Author and journalist |
| Sir Albert Wolff | Chief Justice and Lord Lieutenant of Western Australia |

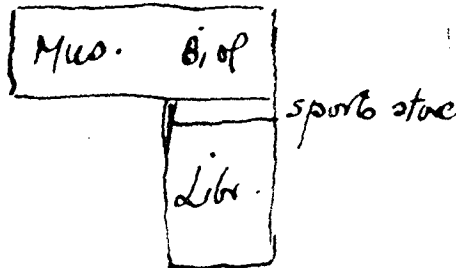
This list would have been more extensive but for World War I in which many of the most promising ex-students lost their lives.

APPENDIX 3

23 Colin Grove W.P.
Aug 1st, 1944.

Dear Reginald.

This is a letter that will come to you on my death & concerns P.M.S. our dearest child. My wife & I have made joint wills that on the death of both of us make a substantial bequest to the P.M.S. Library in memory of our son Ted. What worries me is that the present library accommodation is quite inadequate for a school like P.M.S. my idea is to break down the walls & take in the Biol. room & Museum making an L shaped room like this



This would not cost much perhaps £400-500 but 4 rooms would have to be provided for Biology. I am writing to you & others viz. John Day, Hector, Loreff, Cyril Bird, Frank Brashaw & Hiddy to see what the Old Hods. can do about

12/11/75
or. Perhaps with the assistance
of the government of the day &
the Principal architect you may
be able to do what I envisage.
I have always looked upon you & Dorothy
as some of the best people that were
with me at 1700. I wish you well
& leave you with an old man's
blessing.

Yours very sincerely
J. Parsons.

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