M.O.W

THE AUSTRALIAN DEAF CITIZEN

No. 3 July, August, September 1940

A QUARTERLY MAGAZINE

Dedicated to the Interests of the Deaf of Australia

Single Copies, 6d. Yearly Subscription 2/-

Owned and Edited by J. P. Bourke
No. 1, Acre Place, Malvern, S.E. 4
Victoria, Australia

"I am aware that many object to the severity of my language; but is there not cause for severity? I will be as harsh as Truth, and as uncompromising as Justice. On this subject I do not wish to think, or speak, or write, with moderation. No! No! Tell a man whose house is on fire to give a moderate alarm; tell the mother to gradually extricate her babe from the fire into which it has fallen—but urge me not to use moderation in a cause like the present. I am in earnest—I will not equivocate—I will not excuse—I will not retreat a single inch—and I will be heard. The apathy of the people is enough to make every statue leap from its pedestal and hasten the resurrection of the dead."

—From William Lloyd Garrison's "The Liberator" (1831)

The "we" may be the Editorial "we" but it means I

EDITORIAL.

The Death of the Victorian Superintendent.

The Superintendent of the Victorian Society (E.J.D.Abraham) died on 29th July after a brief illness. He was 73 years of age, and had controlled the Society for 39 years.

A deaf friend, knowing the relations that had existed between us, asked us if we were happy. We said, "No". We were neither glad nor sorry. He destroyed our peace of mind long ago and made a terrible wreck of our life. His death has not restored the one nor salvaged the other.

The evil that he has done lives after him. It will be a collosal task to undo all the evils of his administration and to clean up the mess he has left behind him.

Except for brief obituary notices in two out of the four Melbourne dailies no public man of any standing in the community paid any sort of tribute to him. Yet publicity was the breath of life to him, and he had done everything in his power to keep himself before the public, and had for years been proclaiming from the housetops what a wonderful man he was, what a wonderful Society he had given the deaf, and what a wonderful interpreter to the deaf he was.

True, he was.

As we promised to give verse and chapter for all our statements, the following are condensations of articles that appeared in two Melbourne dailies. (The articles bear no signature, but we all know he wrote them himself):-

> "Today the deaf and dumb people of Victoria celebrate the 25th anniversary of the coming of Mr.Abraham to Australia. In the years that have elapsed since, Mr.Abraham has raised the status of the deaf and dumb people of this State to as near normal as conditions will permit, and has built up an adult deaf and dumb organisation that is notable amongst institutions of its kind in the world. He has turned his unique and extensive experience of educational and missionary work to the full and best use to help the mutes.
>
> "After a very wide experience in work for the deaf and dumb in England, Mr.Abraham . . . accepted the post of (chaplain) to the Victorian mission. Immediately on his arrival he set out on an extensive publicity campaign, which began with a great demonstration in the Melbourne Town Hall. So effective was his appeal for the uplift of the deaf and dumb that every similar meeting that followed was also crowded. By 1909 the public had given him all he had asked for, and more. Three years after his coming the deaf mute centre was erected. *He also obtained free and compulsory education for deaf and dumb children, a ~~(church, a secondary educational)~~ institute for the adult mutes, and a home and farm for the aged and infirm.

Missioner

The land and £1600 was owing in 1900 that was £6000 worth

Before he came the School had done all the necessary work to secure it

It was done at the school and the boys before he came were of a high standard.

"The more important work of making desirable citizens of the 'normal' young deaf mute population was meanwhile progressing steadily under the tutorship and supervision of Mr.Abraham at the deaf mute centre.

"Jolimont Square is now the centre of all the activities of the Adult Deaf and Dumb Society. Nothing seems to be missing, except, perhaps, spoken language and adequate building accommodation to carry on the work. It is what the deaf mutes call 'their world', and Mr.Abraham is its 'uncrowned King'.

"Mr.Abraham is an acknowledged master of the language of gesture. With his hands and pose the language of the silent life becomes poetry - the poetry of motion. Anyone familiar with musical poetry witnessing a recital by him in gesture needs no spoken language to follow him. His graceful gestures tell everything. He has given the deaf mutes a different outlook on life and taught them to realise the things worth while; given them confidence in themselves, and cheered and helped them at all times. And they fully realise what he stands for in their lives. His has been an inspired life of self-sacrifice, with hard work and heavy responsibilities, but the mute world contains many very real monuments to his splendid service." - Argus, Oct.9, 1926.

"This date, 9th October, brings to the memory of the older deaf and dumb citizens the coming of their principal, Mr. E.J.D. Abraham, to Australia twenty-five years ago. They could not understand why a man of such repute as an expert among the deaf in England would come so far, and be content to take charge of a little mission here. ... But it was a good day for the Victorian deaf, for his ambition for them has always been, and still is, on very high lines. Being a man who inspired confidence in those he wanted to help him - and always fortunate in choosing the right ones - he soon accomplished most of the things he had in mind for the betterment of the deaf and dumb.

"Mr. Abraham has a wonderful command of the language of the deaf, and can translate the spoken tongue into the language of gesture as rapidly as uttered. Life to the deaf mute is a cinema picture, and because of that it is essential that the best of all possible instruction be given for them to get the right outlook on life.

"Looking at the work comprehensively, one marvels at it. Here is a people shut out from the world of others, confined to a limited world of their own, inspired by a man of indomitable will and determination, with a belief in all things being possible, they have risen to as near the normal standard of the unhandicapped as conditions permit.

"Mr.Abraham is essentially a business man, with vision, vitality and determination. The little mission, soon, under his direction, developed into a fairly wealthy Society". - Age, Oct. 9, 1926.

That is only a fraction of all the self-adulation he indulged in. A stream of that sort of thing runs through the Society's literature, and he wrote every word of it.

Although he has spent only half the time in Victoria that the Victorian superintendent had, his opposite number at the Institute for the Blind was made a Member of the British Empire in recognition of his work for them.

Both Mr.H.V.Hersee, a former superintendent of the New South Wales Society, who spent only a few years in Australia, and Mr.J.M.Paul of the Queensland Reform Association of Deaf and Dumb Citizens, who was less known and spent less time in Australia than the late superintendent, were made Justices of the Peace, yet Mr.Abraham was never granted this honor.

This is not set down in malice, but is cited to show that the powers that be around Melbourne must have had an inkling into his real character, yet all appeals to their humanity and sense of justice to save us from him were in vain.

At the annual meeting of the Society, to be held in October, the hearing board will talk a lot of nonsense about carrying on his great work. But what did he do? This is what he did. (The quotation is from Graham Wallas's Life of Charles II):-

"Never since the foundation of the monarchy had any sovereign so "debauched the whole national life, and the world at large began to take "account of the legacies he had left.

"First of these were his character and example, next was his court "from which corruption had long welled forth over and through the whole "nation. In civil matters there had prevailed the rule of the worst; in "finance, constantly recurring deficits and an ever-nearing prospect of "bankruptcy; among the lower classes, pauperism, ignorance, a deep sense "of injustice, and a rapidly increasing hatred for those who had so long "oppressed them".

His Real Character.

We wrote the sketch of his character given below long before his death. We have had a tussle with ourselves as to whether we should publish it to the world or not. It means we will get ourselves even more disliked, more mistrusted and more misunderstood than ever. We again repeat, as we have so often done before, that the chief purpose of this magazine is to try and win the friendship of the hearing public on behalf of the deaf, by showing them the price we have paid for the lack of it.

We have reached that stage where we are quite indifferent to either praise or blame, but we do get upset at people making his victims suffer for the crime of the late superintendent. Making the innocent suffer for the guilty is not Australian, or ought not to be. It is not as if we were affronting the sound prejudice of the English mind against all forms of unqualified statements. Facts are facts. You cannot get away from facts. The late superintendent never tried to hide anything that he did. He knew that nobody cared what he did, nor how he treated us, and nobody has. He

stands self-revealed by his own words and acts. For instance, in the excerpt from the "Argus" quoted above, he calls himself a chaplain, in the "Age" he refers to himself as a business man. In both articles he keeps stressing the importance of building up the character of the deaf, and then proceeds to prove that he was absolutely unfitted to do this by stating almost in one and the same breath that "he taught the deaf and dumb the things worth while" and "changed a simple gospel mission into a fairly wealthy society". A whole mass of evidence of the same kind has accumulated against him, evidence furnished by himself.

If we could think of any good he ever did or of one decent trait in his character, we would be reluctant to do so we admit, but we would put it down here. It would strengthen our case, for the world believes that no one can be altogether bad. The very terribleness of his character was a bar to his exposure. People never having met or suffered under such men cannot believe that they exist. He came under the ban of public censure on numerous occasions - in the Press, in Parliament, and by public men, for his conduct, his trickery, and for his heartless and callous treatment, not only of the deaf, but of hearing people too (See "Benevolence and the Banned Baby", by J.P. Bourke).

He was a man who not only battened on human misery and degradation, but he created the degradation and much of the misery on which he battened. His whole life was spent in deceiving others. There was no need for him to do so. He was born that way and could not help it. He had neither heart nor principle nor conscience. Everything that he did, he did with a crafty, treacherous and selfish motive. The words Truth, Duty, and Honour had no meaning whatever for him. He ruined everything he touched and was false to every trust reposed in him. He made a farce and a mockery of everything that decent men hold sacred and dear - religion, for instance, and constitutional, democratic and representative government, and justice and freedom. He never honoured a promise, nor kept an appointment on time. He was by nature an arrogant and insulting bully, and he tried to make all the subordinates (including the hearing members of the board), over whom he had any influence, insulting bullies too. His administration will be known in our history as The Reign of the Servants and the Rule of the Brutes.

20th September, 1940. W

Definite Objects and a Legally Binding Constitution, the Supreme Need of the Victorian Society.

Now that the one who sowed discord amongst, estranged us from one another, and prevented us from working together for the good of our mates is gone, it is to be hoped that the deaf will get together and do what should have been done forty years ago - give the Society definite objects and a constitution that will protect the deaf and their rights and liberties in the Society.

We deaf know our problems, needs and difficulties better than any hearing men can know them, and we should have the right to say how our

mates should be treated and decide what must be done to look after the deaf in the right way. If we deaf do not stand up for our rights and liberties, no one else is going to do it. We have proved that during the last forty years. We should therefore be given the right to define the objects of the Society. We should also have the right to frame its constitution, and frame it on our experiences of the past. We need a constitution that will prevent a small clique of hearing men getting a section of the deaf under their control and using this section as a means to fool the public and then running the Society to suit themselves. It has sometimes been asked by this deaf, "Who is the higher authority in the Society, the general board or the deaf committee?" The answer is, "Neither", because neither the general board nor the deaf committee have been elected in the legal way according to the provisions of the Hospitals and Charities Act.

The present system of two authorities in the Society (the board and the deaf committee) must be done away with and we must insist on having only one governing body - a governing body elected at one and the same meeting by the deaf and hearing subscribers.

The present hearing board cannot look after your needs, interests and welfare since they do not know what your needs are, or what should be done to look after your welfare in the right way. They will carry on the late superintendent's system of using you as a means to get subscriptions out of the public. That is what he taught them. They will continue to run the Society without plan or direction. We must insist on having a board that will derive its authority from the subscribers. We will thus control the board, and prevent it, as in the past, from controlling the Society and the deaf.

It is an outrage on the established standard of British Justice to put a stigma on the deaf by refusing to allow them to vote on equal terms with the hearing subscribers. We must appeal to the Charities Board to allow the subscribers (both deaf and hearing) to vote and stand for election on a minimum subscription of 2/6 a year. At present, the Charities Board will not allow anyone to vote at the election for board members unless he has given ten shillings within the financial year, but ten shillings a year is too much to ask of the majority of the deaf. A subscriber, of course, can give as much over two and sixpence as he likes, but 2/6 should be the minimum.

A good workable board should consist of five hearing members and ten deaf members. This would constitute the governing directorate of the Society. The ten deaf members would be formed into a sub-committee to look after the domestic side of the work at headquarters. It would take the place of the present deaf committee, but as part of the board the deaf members (of the sub-committee) would have equal power and authority with the hearing members of the board.

Such a board, elected by the true friends of the deaf, would protect the deaf in their Society; bring peace and harmony amongst us once more; end all our differences; clean up the mess left by the late superintendent; look after the interests of the deaf and help them to overcome their difficulties, and give them an assured future of usefulness and happiness.

All that we deaf ask of the board is the reign of law based upon the consent of the governed, but they will stop at nothing to prevent us getting these.

From Here, There and Everywhere.

The Hearing Board's Great-grandfathers.

"Over the governing authorities of this precariously balanced social structure there brooded a smug complacency. The Corporation of Exeter (in 1827) consisted of twenty-five persons who recruited their ranks by co-option, and enjoyed the administration of the city property (to the tune of some £11,000 a year) without responsibility to anyone but themselves. What else they did and what other civic functions they performed - except those of hospitality and ceremonial - no one in Exeter could say, since their business proceedings, if any, were wreathed in secrecy. The Corporation then formed a small clique of rich merchants, who looked after themselves - not the city.

"At the other end of the social scale there existed rampant poverty in Exeter. But with this the City Fathers had nothing whatever to do. It was the care of another privileged body - the Corporation of the Poor, a body of forty guardians which had existed ever since 1698 for the purpose of running a workhouse. They, too, enjoyed the spending of a large sum out of the poor rate and were accountable to nobody for what they did with the money. In 1827 they were found to have wasted some £10,000 in seven years in the administration of the workhouse, which was nothing better than a prison, held up in terrorem over the heads of those unfortunate beings who are compelled to apply for parish relief."

- "The Cobbett of the West" (Thomas Latimer), by R.S. Lambert.

Superintendents of Adult Deaf and Dumb Societies.

"The personnel of the missions (societies) varies as to qualifications within the widest possible limits. The better societies insist on adequate preparation and a suitable personality. In other cases missions have been staffed by persons apparently with no other quality than the desire to earn a livelihood by ministering to the deaf and dumb and with no other qualification than the ability to communicate with them by the fingers, and not even so much in every case. These and other inequalities would be, to a large extent, solved by the creation of a body of public opinion among the missions, requiring evidence of character, proper personal qualifications, and adequate training prior to final appointment, and also the fixing of appropriate salaries in connection with the post. In view of the growing demands made upon the personnel of deaf missions, a movement has been on foot in the past two years (1930-32) to secure means by which missionaries may become better qualified for their duties. This has become possible through the establishment of the Joint Examination Board of the Central Advisory Council for the Spiritual Care of the Deaf and Dumb and the Council of the Church Missioners to the Deaf. A diploma is granted after examination upon a syllabus embracing religious knowledge, general knowledge including matters of civic and industrial interest, history, geography and arithmetic."

- From "A Study of the Deaf in England and Wales", by Dr. A. Eichholz.

A Riddle.

Why are deaf people like Swiss clocks?
Because we cannot make them hear.(here).

The Blind Provide Music for Deaf Dancers.

Brighter, bigger and better than ever would best describe the Extra Special Euchre Party and Dance held by the Past Pupils' Association at the Victorian Institution on 26th September.

A great crowed turned up (106 to be precise), and everything was very gay and animated. Mr.G.Newnham, one of the most highly esteemed members of the deaf community, and who has blossomed out into an expert dance conductor, kindly gave his services as M.C. for the evening.

Dance prizes went to Miss Derbyshire and Mr. George (Monte Carlo), and Miss Woolhouse and Mr. Griffiths (Lucky Spot).

The ladies' prizes in the Euchre Tournament went to Mrs.Beard and Mrs. McMillin; gents to Mr.Luff and Mr.Mortimer.

Raffles were conducted and a collection taken up in aid of the Red Cross. The prizes were won by Miss I. Boast and Mr.McCaskell. The amount taken was just a penny short of £4.13. 0.

We were told that the Association was trying to find an orchestra suitable for the deaf, and were asked to come and see if it solved the problem satisfactorily. We found that it had engaged blind musicians from the Institute for the Blind (which is just as it should be), and that Mr. W. McCaskell, superintendent of the Institution, had borne the cost of the orchestra and, incidentally, paid for the refreshments.

The deaf committee of the Association donated 30/- for the prizes, and its members provided over 200 home-made sandwiches.

It was the first occasion in the history of the Assocation that there was no counter attraction held at Jolimont.

The committee is to be congratulated on making a success of the Association in spite of antagonism, hostility, difficulties, luke-warmness, and setbacks in the past.

We understand that a jarring note was introduced by a member of the deaf committee of the Society.

The deaf of the Society were having a Dance and Card Party a few days later in aid of the Red Cross (which was very creditable of them), and they were upset at the two functions clashing, as it would spoil their takings. It was also stated that there were rumours abroad that the monies were to be used by the Association instead of being donated to the Red Cross.

We are not here to discuss the rights and wrongs of these statements. Personally we know that the Association would not do such a thing.

The deaf will go where they are happiest. It was the late superintendent who created the hostility between the two bodies, and now that he has gone the rivalry and antagonism should end. There is room for both organisations. Most schools have Past Pupils Associations, and there is no reason why the deaf should not have one. For the good of the cause the committees of the two bodies should end their differences and work in harmony with each other.

Vale!

MR. ROBERT STOREY - We are sorry to record the death, at the age of 31, of Mr.R.Storey. He was amongst those who came to be known as the "loyal deaf" - a name given to themselves by that section who remained true to their cause and their class and refused to follow the late superintendent. He had a natural urge to help his mates and was always in the forefront of the battle against the sinister ways of the late superintendent.

At the time of his death he was treasurer of the Past Pupils' Association.

We extend our deepest sympathy to his wife and relations.

DR. MALONEY, M.H.R. - We also mourn, with all Victoria, the passing of Dr. W. Maloney, of the kind heart and wide humanity. His death was like a personal blow to us. He was amongst the very few who believed in the sincerity of this scribe, and on our representation came forward (at the Melbourne Town Hall on July 18, 1935) to publicly protest against the hearing administration of the Society's treatment of the adult deaf.

"Our world is none the kinder now Great-Heart hath passed!"
The world could be made a better place if there were more like him, but we may never see his like again in a generation.

To his family and friends we extend our deepest sympathy.

THE STORY OF A DEAF DRUDGE

b y

J. P. BOURKE.

Author of "The After-School Problems of the Deaf and Dumb", "Benevolence and the Banned Baby", "Fiction and Fact" - A Pamphlet.

".... Added to which was the fact that John was deaf, and therefore was obviously intended to be a hewer of wood and a drawer of water for his inferiors".

- From King Silence, the Rev. A.H. Payne.

No. 1 Acre Place, Malvern. S.E.4.
Victoria. Australia.

(P.T.O.)

The deaf will go where they are happiest. It was the late superintendent who created the hostility between the two bodies, and now that he has gone the rivalry and antagonism should end. There is room for both organisations. Most schools have Past Pupils Associations, and there is no reason why the deaf should not have one. For the good of the cause the committees of the two bodies should end their differences and work in harmony with each other.

Vale!

MR. ROBERT STOREY - We are sorry to record the death, at the age of 31, of Mr.R.Storey. He was amongst those who came to be known as the "loyal deaf" - a name given to themselves by that section who remained true to their cause and their class and refused to follow the late superintendent. He had a natural urge to help his mates and was always in the forefront of the battle against the sinister ways of the late superintendent.

At the time of his death he was treasurer of the Past Pupils' Association.

We extend our deepest sympathy to his wife and relations.

DR. MALONEY, M.H.R. - We also mourn, with all Victoria, the passing of Dr. W. Maloney, of the kind heart and wide humanity. His death was like a personal blow to us. He was amongst the very few who believed in the sincerity of this scribe, and on our representation came forward (at the Melbourne Town Hall on July 18, 1935) to publicly protest against the hearing administration of the Society's treatment of the adult deaf.

"Our world is none the kinder now Great-Heart hath passed!"
The world could be made a better place if there were more like him, but we may never see his like again in a generation.

To his family and friends we extend our deepest sympathy.

THE STORY OF A DEAF DRUDGE

by

J. P. BOURKE.

Author of "The After-School Problems of the Deaf and Dumb", "Benevolence and the Banned Baby", "Fiction and Fact" - A Pamphlet.

".... Added to which was the fact that John was deaf, and therefore was obviously intended to be a hewer of wood and a drawer of water for his inferiors".

- From King Silence, the Rev. A.H. Payne.

No. 1 Acre Place, Malvern. S.E.4.
Victoria. Australia.

(P.T.O.)

"The second (duty of a biographer), no less surely, is to maintain his own freedom of spirit. It is not his business to be complimentary; it is his business to lay bare the facts of the case, as he understands them. That is what I have aimed at in this book - to lay bare the facts of some cases as I understand them, dispassionately, impartially, and without ulterior intentions. To quote the words of a Master - 'I do not criticise, I do not judge, I expose!"

- From the Preface to
Lytton Strachey's
"Eminent Victorians".

Chapter 4.

The Board of Management.

"He does not understand; he does not understand. People say that those who visit the East think the Oriental a very easy person to comprehend. After they have been there a few years they are less certain of it. After many years their doubts are grave. After half a lifetime they know that they must live with the people of the East, eat with them, talk with them, play with them, work with them, be of them, before they can hope to understand them in the least. Why don't they realise that the same is true of the deaf?"

- From "King Silence", by Rev. A.H. Payne.

Adult deaf and dumb societies belong to the deaf, but they are not sufficiently well-educated enough to manage the affairs of their societies alone. They elect working committees from amongst themselves but these need stiffening with a few hearing men who are used to business management. These hearing men are supposed to join the boards out of kindness and sympathy and with a desire to be of some service to the deaf.

This service consists in helping the deaf to solve their problems, carrying out suggestions re buildings and improvements in the societies, being responsible for and directing finances, appointing and controlling the paid officials and to see that they do their duty, and to advise the deaf when difficulties in connection with their societies crop up.

The Society, like all the charities of Victoria, is registered (incorporated) under the Hospitals and Charities Act. This Act is policed by the Charities Board of Victoria.

The Act gives the subscribers themselves the right to see that the money they subscribe is used for the purpose for which it was donated, but the subscribers do not want to be bothered. They give the money and salve their conscience and that is enough for them. The consequence is that these charities become the playthings of well-meaning but irresponsible philanthropists who keep the committees (boards) a close preserve for themselves and their friends. The Government had to amend the Act to try and put a stop to this. Our Society is no exception.

The following is a short summary of the Act:-

Any body of persons wishing to form a charitable society must submit its constitution to the Charities Board and state what its objects are. This constitution must be determined by the majority of the votes of the subscribers present at a general meeting convened by the secretary of such society.

If the Charities Board endorses this constitution, the subscribers of such charitable society must elect a board to manage and govern same.

A subscriber, according to the Act, is any person who gives a contribution of not less than £1 within the financial year.

All candidates for election to the board must be nominated by two financial members, and no one but financial members are allowed to vote or stand for election.

No person who is not elected by the subscribers shall be a member of the board.

The board has the right to make by-laws on all matters affecting the management of the society.

Section 66 says: "Any subscriber who wishes to test the validity of any such by-laws can do so through the Supreme Court, but must pay £15 into the Court as security for costs."

That section is the only safeguard that can prevent the board of such society from developing into a tyranny.

Even if the hearing members of the board of our Society would obey these regulations we would have no remedy against their tyranny, incompetence, maladministration of the Society, and their treatment of us, since the Charities Board upholds them in their flouting of all these regulations.

They tell the public that they are elected annually by the life-governors and subscribers to the Society, but not one of them could tell you by how many votes he got on the board. If the election of these men depended upon the subscribers there would be no board at all.

It was Abraham's nature to publicly denounce a thing as wrong and then to go behind everybody's back and do that very thing himself. As related in Chapter Three, he, when in England, was continually attacking the British Deaf and Dumb Association. In the March, 1895, issue of his paper "The British Deaf Mute", he has this to say of the method of electing the committee of this association:-

"Will my readers who were present at the Congress of the British Deaf "and Dumb Association call to mind the method by which the officials were "elected. I have a distinct recollection of seeing a group of retiring "officials standing in front of the platform with their backs to the audience, "discussing over the names to be submitted. Presently they retired to their "seats, one member ascended the platform and read a list of names, and before "you could spell Jack Robinson on your fingers the Committee had been elected."

That, without the pretence, however, of turning their backs on the audience, is exactly the way the hearing members of the board are elected. At the annual meeting of the Society, the honorary secretary to the Board reads out a list of names, and that is the election.

Abraham chose some of them. These in their turn induce their friends, relations and business associates to fill the necessary vacancies on the board. Though it was against the law for him to do so, he boasted openly that he hand-picked his board. ("Being a man who inspired confidence in those he wanted to help him - and always fortunate in choosing the right one - he soon accomplished most of the things he had in mind for the betterment of the deaf and dumb." - "Age", 9. 10. 26).

A power of personal fascination gave him friendship which he could never have won by solid worth. He boasted openly about his fascinating ways - "his magnetic charm", he called it. His method of obtaining the members of the board was to join as many social clubs as possible. At these clubs he ferreted out the men whom he thought would be most useful to him. He wormed himself into their confidence, told them about the deaf and dumb and the

Society, used his blandishments on them, and induced them to become members of the board. That is why he became a Freemason and also a member of the Rotary Club. It also gave him an air of importance to be able to boast about belonging to these organisations.

Much more so than the governments of the different States have over the ordinary citizens, the board of the Society has it in its power to see that every intelligent deaf boy and girl get the chance of a permanent job on a living wage, (which is one of the principal objects of the after-school welfare care of the deaf and dumb) but in order to do this it is necessary for these men to understand something of the deaf. The deaf and dumb belong to the special classes and have problems, needs, and difficulties peculiar to themselves. To help them in the right way it is necessary for board members to learn something about these problems, but they have never tried to do so, and they made us pay a terrible and dreadful price for it all.

It was all due to the treachery of Abraham. It was his duty to inform the board of the real objects of the Society, but he did not want the Society to have specific and endorsed objects. Its objects were to be whatever he wanted the board and the public to believe they were. He stated at various times that the Society was: "a St.Paul's Cathedral", "a Y.M.C.A.", a "Y.W.C.A.", "a secondary educational institute", "a high school", "a University", "a workingman's college", "a home", "a charity organisation society", "a labour bureau", and "a club house", and that the farm was "a home","a training farm", "an agricultural college", and "our Garden of Eden".

The following are samples of his vague statements in regard to the objects of the Society :-

"Objective: The Welfare of the Adult Deaf of the State" (official notepaper).

"Objective: The After-School Welfare of the whole of the deaf and dumb citizens of the State, providing institutional substitutes to replace the lost sense of hearing" (official notepaper).

"The aim of the Society is to make Full and Complete provision for the whole of the Adult Deaf of the State" (Ann. Rpt., 1930).

"Objective: To bring into existence conditions that will so far as humanly possible open to the Deaf and Dumb citizens the opportunities already available to normal citizens". (Circular published in 1931).

Anything but a plain and straightforward statement as to what the objects of the Society really were!

Not understanding the deaf and dumb and knowing nothing at all about the purpose of the Society, the board members took their views of the deaf from Abraham, and saw the Society through his eyes. They believed everything he said, and his whole aim was to trick and deceive them. He taught them that the principal object of the Society was to get money from the public, and to him its objects were whatever he thought would bring in the most money. He did all their thinking for them. They were merely his dupes and his tools. The way he fooled them would be laughable if there had not been so much tragedy behind it all for the deaf. They are well-meaning men who would

really like to help the deaf in some way, but they have not the remotest idea what must be done to overcome the difficulties of the deaf and to look after their interests in the right way. They do not know what they are on the board for. They do not know what the purpose of a government is. They saw nothing and nobody in the Society but Abraham. He was of more importance to them than all the deaf put together. For forty years they have been offering us up as sacrifices to him and his family. They may claim to have done something for us, but if they had treated us half as well as they treated the Abraham family they would have demoralised us all with kindness. They merely met once a month to confirm all he had done and agree to all he intended to do. Their irresponsibility stands self-revealed in our annual reports, and they will acquit or convict themselves of any charges we deaf make against them.

They saw more of Abraham than they did of us deaf, and took his side. They were there to protect us from his exploitation and his harsh and unjust treatment of us, but we found it useless to complain to them about his conduct and his treatment of us. They upheld and supported him in everything he did. Even when we produced positive proof of the charges we made against him it made no difference to them. In the end I came to see that they did not care what sort of character Abraham had or whether he had a character or not.

Some of the deaf in their despair put it all down to Freemasonary, but the fact is that like Abraham the members of the board are not new figures, but are a product of our social system. Dickens trounced them in Oliver Twist and Lord Shaftesbury fought them for years.

Here is an example: Abraham told the public one thing about the objects of the farm, the board another.

Although Victoria knew nothing about the impotent deaf (the mentally deficient, and the intelligent unemployed deaf), Abraham put the State to shame for its supposed lack of interest in, and its neglect of this section of the deaf community. He told the public that if it would give him the money to establish a home and farm for the impotent deaf and then make them over to him, he would guard, tenderly care for, and train the mentally deficient deaf; and give the intelligent unemployed deaf work in pleasant surroundings and under pleasant conditions. By the way he talked, the country was led to believe that he would build "a brick and mortar elysium where it was to be all play and no work".

The board, on the other hand, kept repeating that the farm was for the aged, infirm and mentally deficient only. It thought that the unemployed would all rush to the farm and thereby increase expenditure. It therefore frowned at and discouraged Abraham from sending the out-of-work to Blackburn. In regard to these the thoughts of the board ran along the same lines as did the Board of Guardians in Oliver Twist :-

"The members of this Board were very sage, deep, philosophical men; "and when they came to turn their attention to the workhouse, they found out "at once, what ordinary folks would never have discovered - the poor people "liked it! It was a regular place of public entertainment for the poorer

"classes; a tavern where there was nothing to pay; a public breakfast, "dinner, tea, and supper all the year round; a brick and mortar elysium "where it was all play and no work. 'Oho!' said the Board, looking very "knowing, 'we are the fellows to set this to rights; we'll stop it all in "no time.' So they established the rule that all poor people should have the "alternative of being starved by a gradual process in the house, or by a "quick one out of it."

Abraham merely used the board as a means to fool the public. He made them responsible for statements that under no circumstances would they make, and not only went behind their backs and did what they were there to prevent him from doing but what they forbade him to do. They demand implicit obedience and humble submission from the deaf. We have to cringe to them for our rights and liberties only to get a refusal.

Abraham made fear the principle of his management and he made the board an instrument of his tyranny. To serve his own ends, he was perpetually warning us against his dreadful board.

He talked as if above him hovered an invisible guardian spirit menacing, cruel and terrible, which he referred to as "My Board". And we had need to fear it, for its members took on a character like Abraham's and became as ruthless, merciless and pitiless as he was himself.

....

Chapter 5.

How The Society is Governed.

"Fascism is the negation of what the 'Nordic' peoples understand by liberty. The people, being a congeries of factions, is incapable of directing an efficient government, for its own good it must have an efficient government, and one that is irresistible and has absolutely unlimited power and right of control; as against the government, the people have no rights. The state is incorporated in the government, and the government is incarnate in the person of the chief. The law as laid down by the government is supreme; only the government itself is above the law, and of it no adverse criticism can be tolerated."

- Harmsworth's "History of the World".

The governing directorate (the board of management) of the Society consists of ten hearing men and three deaf representatives. Under Abraham and his board we were governed (and still are) by the methods that have been found effective for keeping subject races in their place, for like the Abyssinians under Italy we do not elect those who govern us.

The board has a constitution (known as the Articles of Association) all to itself. Although the Society belongs to the deaf, they had no say in framing these Articles. They do not protect the deaf in their Society. The board must have framed them as a mere matter of form, for the Articles might as well not exist for all the notice they take of them. They flout one or all of the Articles whenever it suits their purpose to do so.

Those who framed these Articles decided that the Society was to consist of twenty members only - a sort of Fascist Grand Council. Article one says, " 'A member' shall mean the president, vice-president, honorary secretary, honorary treasurer, a member of the board for the time being, a subscriber, and a life-governor". No deaf person can be "a member".

By and from amongst these twenty members a board of ten is appointed to control the affairs of the Society.

The board claims that it is in touch with six hundred adult deaf in Victoria. These ten members, who, as I have already explained, do not understand the adult deaf, their problems, needs and difficulties, have the right to say how these six hundred deaf people shall be treated in their Society.

The deaf are the people most concerned therein as conditions in the Society affect the lives of the deaf and not the lives of the ten hearing men who control the Society, yet these six hundred deaf people have no say in electing these men and no control over them of any sort.

A subscriber is defined as any person who during the financial year gives a donation of ten shillings to the Society.

In the matter of the franchise neither the Commonwealth nor the State Governments discriminate against the deaf and dumb, and at Federal and State

elections they vote on equal terms with the hearing. The board claims that it is there to protect us from social injustice, yet it is the only body in the State that puts a stigma upon us by refusing to allow us to vote on equal terms with the hearing, for even if we deaf give a donation of ten shillings (and many of them do) we are not allowed to vote for the election of nor stand as a candidate with these men. Not only this but they have given themselves the right to refuse to allow me to be a subscriber. I sent the Society a subscription of ten shillings, but the board refused it and returned the money.

The board gives itself the right to register an increase of members. As already explained, this registration consists of the members appointing their friends, relations and business associates to seats on the board. They keep the board a close preserve for themselves and their friends and will not allow either the hearing or the deaf subscribers any power or authority in the Society.

All board meetings are held behind closed doors and not a whisper of what goes on there is allowed to reach the deaf. It is considered heresy for the deaf representatives to tell their mates anything of what is said at board meetings.

For faults real or imaginary the deaf are condemned without a hearing. There is only one side of the case - the board's side. They give the deaf no opportunity to explain their side of the matter. As will be seen later on in this story, the board condemned me absent and unheard and expelled me from the Society. I threatened it with a Supreme Court action if it did not withdraw its embargo against me, and they ignominiously climbed down. Which proves that they were in the wrong.

If you are an employee of theirs, the first intimation you have that they are not satisfied with you is notice of dismissal. Abraham was to blame, and not these men. He made them what they were, but if you brought these things under their notice they would assert that they were responsible.

Why do these men behave in this way? The following is an extract from a letter that appeared in the "Age" :-

"Mention has been made of the government of the State by a committee of "business men. But knowing the history of the various States of America run "by 'business men' one may doubt the wisdom of this course. There are, of "course, very excellent men in business as there are in other pursuits. But "one cannot always take the 'business man' at his own valuation. Many are so "ignorant and prejudiced against any view but their own that government by "them would spell chaos".

Perhaps that is the answer!

Government by different business men of Melbourne has, in the case of our Society, really spelt chaos. Under them, Abraham plundered, wrecked, and left the Society in ruins, and reduced the deaf to the condition of slaves, for we were not free under him. We had no rights except those he cared to grant us.

"Story of a Deaf Drudge"

The three deaf representatives on the board are chosen from the successful candidates of the deaf committee.

The Deaf Committee.

The deaf committee consists of ten deaf representatives and a hearing member of the board. Abraham was also a member of it. No deaf person can stand as a candidate or vote at the election of the deaf committee unless he gives a subscription of two shillings and sixpence to the Society within the financial year. These candidates must be nominated by two subscribing deaf members.

Abraham gave himself and the deaf caretaker at the Centre permanent seats on the committee as Chairman and Vice-Chairman respectively. The hearing member of the committee is appointed and not elected.

Should have been by deaf

The three deaf representatives on the board were appointed by Abraham.

This committee has a constitution all to itself (known as "The Rules of the Deaf Committee"). These were framed by Abraham.

If Abraham possessed a power of personal magnetism over hearing people whom he wanted to use, he possessed the same power over the deaf, but in a greater degree. Added to which is the fact that the deaf as a class are morally timid and succumb more easily to stronger wills than their own than the hearing do.

He took advantage of these characteristics and used the power men like him possess over the deaf and dumb to get as many as possible of them under his influence.

He had the right to appoint and dismiss all the employees of the Society hearing or deaf. no

He had also the right to grant or refuse unemployment relief to the out-of-work.

He therefore induced as many as possible of those under his influence, as many as possible of the employees of the Society, and as many as possible of those on unemployment relief to stand for election. His idea was to have the committee as weak and as pliable as possible in order to bend it to his will. By this means he deprived us of the only protection we could look to - the protection of the deaf themselves.

Rule 2 of the constitution reads: "It shall be the business of the "Deaf Committee to look after the arrangements for Divine worship, classes, "meetings, and social gatherings held at the Centre".

That, according to the constitution he framed for the committee, is the only right he allowed the deaf in their Society - the right to act as servants therein. In actual fact the committee was whatever Abraham liked to make it. He gave it whatever power he wanted it to have. He made it the supreme authority in the Society whenever it suited his purpose to do so.

The Deaf Committee.

He created this system so that should the hearing board turn against him (and, as shall be seen, some of them did), and try to dismiss him he could take refuge behind the committee. He knew that the deaf were too helpless against him and lacked the moral courage to dismiss him.

As Chairman of all committee meetings, he arranged the agenda; cajoled and flattered those under his influence; sneered at and insulted the strong members if they dared to speak their minds to him; frowned down the employees if they opposed his wishes; and tried to mould everyone's thoughts to his own way of thinking and get them to vote in the way he wanted them to.

He used the committee for the same purpose as he used the board, as a means to fool the public and to make the State believe that everything was right with the adult deaf and the Society.

He claimed this openly but in later years it was not so.

Under such a system as this we had no control over our own servants. They controlled us. From the servant of the deaf, Abraham became their master. For all practical purposes he was the Adult Deaf and Dumb Society, the board of management, and the deaf committee all rolled into one. No one had the power to dismiss him, no matter how bad he was. He acted as if he owned the Society and granted us its privileges as if he was doing us a favour, and used the committee to insult and humiliate their mates and help him to keep them in subjection.

(Note: I have written in the past tense, but up to this writing (6/10/40) Abraham's system still continues).

To be Continued.

.....