

# *The Ewings'* *Report on the Deaf*

Sir.—I wish to correct several gross inaccuracies which appear in the Ewing Report on schools for the deaf in Australia as published in "The Age" (3/11).

1. "THE HEARING AIDS used at the Victorian School for the Deaf should be replaced with modern equipment."

In reality the aids used are identical with those approved by the London County Council and used in its schools for the deaf.

They are of modern design and, with the exception of two, have been imported recently.

More of these aids would have been in use had the Education department listened to the appeals of the school and the house committee.

There are eight group aids at the school provided by the house committee and the parents' association.

2. "Little liaison or co-ordination exists between the school section and the associated residential institution."

As one who has worked for 38 years as a resident and non-resident teacher, I deny this statement.

It is as the result of the co-operation that exists between school and house that the house authorities

equipped the school with its first hearing aids, and it is better equipped than the average school seen by me during my visit to England last year.

It was co-operation that brought the model kindergarten at Burwood into existence. In many ways the two sections speak and act as one.

3. "Speech and lip reading are not used as the basis of communication."

Many of the pupils of the Victorian school (as many as we think possible) do use speech and lip reading freely, as a visit to the school would soon demonstrate.

As ex-head master of the school, I was, and am, a firm believer in oralism, but not the rigid, compulsory type which prohibits free expression among the children themselves by the use of what is to them a natural means, and to whom this expression is life and happiness.

Yours, &c.,

**J. H. BURCHETT** (ex-Head Master, Victorian School for the Deaf).

equipped the school with its first hearing aids, and it is

*Education for*

# Education for Deaf Children

THE EWING' REPORT (3/11) is a good example of the hearing person's attitude to the education of the deaf.

All emphasis is on the use of hearing aids and paraphernalia which is left behind when the pupil leaves school.

The pupil with passable hearing will get every preference—as now—and will be trotted out to visitors as proof of the teachers' cleverness in teaching "deaf mutes."

The important thing is whether the ears work, not the brain in between them.

The truly deaf, for whom such schools are supposedly built, will be carefully segregated from the "elite," and will presumably get the educational crumbs that are left over.

The most important reform of all is not mentioned—a free, secular and compulsory education is the deaf child's right, not something to be given to it in charity.

The appeals for assistance, with the emphasis on "afflicted" children in an "institution," are an offence to every deaf person in the State and a reproach to every ordinary citizen.

E. R. NOBLE (Kew).

# Fear Haunts the Councils

MUNICIPAL COUNCILS appear fearful of a loss of authority should a greater Melbourne plan become a reality.

At the same time they complain that they are financially unable to cope with many undertakings they consider to be within the ambit of their duties.

In point of fact, councils have overreached themselves in the assumption of extraneous

overreached themselves in the assumption of extraneous responsibilities.

Council accounts generally show that the financing of movements, having relation to sporting, educational and social matters, runs away with a lot of money (and often borrowed money at that).

Such expenditure is largely sectional, since many rate-payers are in no way benefited.

If councils eschewed things that belong to the State, and renounced the habit of spoon feeding where self-help should apply, they would relieve themselves of the worries associated with unbalanced budgets.

J. F. BRACKEN (Williamstown).

# G.B.S. and Socialism

YOUR ARTICLE (3/11) ON the late Bernard Shaw states that "the influence of Henry George and Karl Marx opened the road to Socialism" for Shaw.

My league wishes to emphasize that the teaching of Henry George, one of the greatest advocates of economic freedom, is diametrically opposed to Socialism and the teachings of Marx, and as such could not have assisted Shaw towards his socialist Communism.

R. N. COLLISON (Honorary Secretary, Henry George League of Victoria).