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ARTX. E.I./S.E.V.	
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For the Newspapers.

[It should be explained that Sir Alfred T. Davies was specially invited to address the Congress on the subject of the use made of the native language in the Education of the children of Wales. He is a well-known and distinguished Welshman who is at the head of the administration of Education in Wales, being Secretary to the Welsh Department of the Board of Education for England and Wales and also His Britannic Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education in the latter country.]

Sir Alfred Davies, -after making some complimentary references to the Basques who, in their devotion to their ancient language and customs, he said, very much resembled his fellow-countrymen the Welsh, -gave an interesting and highly instructive address. The subject assigned to him, he said, was one which naturally had received a good deal of attention in Wales and, indeed, throughout the British Empire, so many parts of which were bilingual. He emphasised the importance, from an educational point of view, of the fullest possible use being made in Education of the mother-tongue, which at the outset the young child alone understood. To impose on children a school curriculum which ignored the native language and native civilisation was to act directly contrary to the best expert opinion. The home language must be the fundamental one, and ^{must} be the medium through which the second language (whatever it was) is taught when the child is ready for instruction in it. The mother-tongue was the language of the hearth and all which that implied, the language of young friendships, close knit in play and in youthful endeavour, the language of emotions which, later, become life's most sacred possession. ^{possibly} Could they hope by ignoring it (and repress it they never could) to appeal successfully to the child's heart, to his intellect or to his imagination and, so, get out of him the best that was in him?

In Wales both policies had been tried. First, the policy of repression of the Welsh language; then that of its toleration

toleration and utilisation. Under the first it was, not so very many years ago, a punishable offence for a Welsh child to be overheard speaking Welsh in school. That system broke down hopelessly, as well it might, years ago. It, in fact, became utterly discredited and, finally, had to be entirely abandoned. That was so because, in the first place, the system was both ethically and morally unsound; and, in the second place, because it was educationally wrong.

Now and for many years past an entirely different spirit and a more enlightened policy had been in operation. That policy was entered on with the full approval and active assistance of the British Government which had recognised the futility of proceeding on the old discredited lines which made Education distasteful to the rising generation. The Government, in fact, had done everything possible to encourage the teaching of Welsh in Wales and to help the children to become as proficient in Welsh as they wished them to be also in English. In the sixteen years in which he had been in charge, under the British Minister of Education, of the administration of Education in Wales, great strides had been made in that direction. The results had been entirely satisfactory. Not only had the altered policy given rise to no political trouble: it had, in fact, had the contrary effect of allaying ill-feeling and discontent. Everyone in Wales was now satisfied with the facilities offered for the retention and utilisation of the old language which was the tongue of the Ancient Britons, the earliest inhabitants of England and Wales, and the language spoken by them before Romans, Dane or Saxon ever invaded their island shores. This, in brief, was the story he had to tell them at Guernica and to an educationist it was as significant as it was true.

[At the close of his address Sir Alfred Davies exhibited some specimens of a number of beautifully printed and illustrated publications in Welsh and English which had been

issued by his Department with a view to encouraging in the schools of Wales the use and study of Welsh, the observance of the National Anniversary of St. David's Day, the singing of Welsh Folk-Songs and the upholding of other national customs. The sale of these publications had reached, he said, the enormous total of over 90,000 copies.]

Sir Alfred Davies's address created much interest among the members of the Congress for whom the subject naturally possessed a special attraction.

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