

Registered April 4th 1906

Advertiser April 6th 1906

THE EDUCATION SYSTEM.

PRIMARY SCHOOLS.

TEACHERS AND TEACHING.

[III.—By our Special Reporter.]

In the preceding articles—except the references to the continuation schools and continuation classes—attention has been directed to institutions outside of the Education Department, the controlling power of the State educational system. Education as applied to schools may be divided into several branches, such as elementary, primary, secondary, and higher. The first two concern, broadly, the instruction of the children up to the fifth class, and the last the advanced courses of the University and the School of Mines. Private schools are usually primary as well as secondary, but the vast majority of the younger generation of the State receive their tuition in the public schools. There the foundations are laid for their future careers, and there consequently the greatest care must be taken to inculcate the desire for learning which is so indispensable. The children may be too irresponsible to indicate any particular line of life even when they pass the fifth standard; but the aim must be to fit them for one of the two great branches—"head or hands." Practically every one in Australia must have a profession or a trade by which to carve out a career, for there are no leisured idlers here outside the ranks of the chronically unemployed. The object of every educational establishment should be to give a lad or a lass an intellectual pursuit or an industrial training. Every one more or less is an unskilled mechanic. The demand is for the skilled scientist or mechanic—there is always room at the top, in spite of what pessimists may croak to the contrary. The Director of Education (Mr. A. Williams) recently returned from Europe rich in up-to-date knowledge of what is done in other lands, full of hope for the future and enthusiastically energetic for the success of the children under his charge. In his annual report, which, according to law, must be presented to the Governor on March 31 each year, he has dealt with the whole scheme of education, and much is hoped for from the conclusions he arrived at as the result of his investigations in the older countries of the world. Mr. Williams has been characterised as a faddist. He is rather an experimentalist than that, and he has the faculty of knowing when an innovation has failed, and has wisdom to try another plan until success is achieved. He has brought to his work a forceful originality which will keep the department out of a groove and steer it clear of old and useless routine. And, of course, omelettes cannot be made without the breaking of eggs.

—Attraction for Teachers.—

A writer pointed out recently that we may organize as we will, devise a gorgeous system with well-equipped schools, highly efficient training colleges, and carefully planned curricula, but that everything really rests upon the work of the individual teacher. Let him be indifferent or unmethodical, and the effect will show in the general character of the scholars. Let him be painstaking, bright, and sympathetic, and his advancement will come from the success of his students. South Australia some time ago lost many of her most promising young teachers, because prospects further afield were more alluring. She has to-day many who are a credit to their profession, and a few who have mistaken their vocation. The public has to face the fact, however, that the department is not attracting into its service as many of the brilliantly brainy young men and women as it should if the work is to advance satisfactorily. Those with a genius for teaching will join the service from sheer love of the work, but there are not enough of these to go round, and inducements must be offered to the ordinary mind with capacity and ambition to enter this particular avenue of employment. It is admitted that in the lower

scale the salaries have not been commensurate with the position, and that there have been also other causes of complaint. Mr. Williams cannot remove every grievance in a day, and ways and means had to be studied. It is gratifying to learn that the acting Minister of Education is determined to increase the financial status of the younger instructors, and that orders have been given to improve the teachers' residences. To expect a man or woman to live in unsuitable premises and do good work in instructing the young is at least foolish. For a married man a four-roomed house with a cellar and a bathroom should be the irreducible minimum of standard.

—Teaching on Individualistic Lines.—

In the past a grave defect of the educational system was that boys and girls were turned out of the schools like shot from a tower in regimental uniformity, all cast in the same mould, all taught similar things, the bright lad instructed no more than the dull boy, and the future University professor learning the same lessons as the lad whose brain fitted him only for the plough. The ploughman has need of education. His knowledge will increase his capacity for work and yield him better returns; but he should not go to the University. The School of Mines or the Agricultural College should be his portion. Genius is not the monopoly of those able to afford the fees of the higher schools. There may be boys on the farm who might make the finest scholars, and there may be lads in the University who are better fitted for a blacksmith's shop. Each to his particular speciality. South Australia needs the best of the brain as well as the muscle of every one of its people. In each child there is some germ which, if cultivated, will make it successful in certain lines. The schoolhouse is the place in which to develop it. Nowadays, under Mr. Williams's regime, better ideas are being gradually introduced. In the primary schools it is impossible, of course, to specialize; but on certain lines teachers are being allowed more liberty to educate their charges on individual lines. A curriculum is set by the department, but the head master has power to work it out in his own way. Suggestions have been made to the effect that the examination of scholars by inspectors should be abolished, and that inspection should be of the school and the teacher, who should really certify to the advancement of each scholar. This, it was considered by some, would lead to each child being directed according to its own particular bent, while the inspector could advise the teacher on the most advantageous methods to pursue. This plan was adopted in certain of the larger schools for a little while, but it has been abolished. Mr. Williams is strongly in favour of continuing the examination of pupils by the Inspectors and in this attitude he is supported by the whole of the inspectorial staff. The teachers, however, are encouraged to strike out paths for themselves, and if the examinations are not satisfactory to them they can examine the school themselves in the presence of the inspectors. Those in authority admit that the visits of inspectors to schools are too short, and perhaps because of this the results are not quite so satisfactory as they otherwise would be. The remedy is to increase the number of the staff, which would allow the officials to devote more time to each of the classes.

—Manual Training.—

Experts agree that however much intellectual studies are pursued, the manual side must not be neglected. The Australian soldier in South Africa proved his worth over the English "Tommy" because he was a handy and adaptable man. The need for the training of the hand is not so apparent in South Australia as in other places with congested cities, where the children never touch a spade or a piece of harness, and not so great in the country as in Adelaide, but the experience of some of the highest authorities in Europe shows that pupils who spent half their time in intellectual courses and half in manual work mastered their former lessons more thoroughly and in less time than other students of the same brain capacity who gave all their attention to books. One of the finest educationalists in the world is now engaged on further tests in this connection. In South Australia the same thing has been observed. In some parts there are half-time schools, which a teacher attends one week out of two. On the other days the schools are closed, yet it has been found that the little folk in these schools are quicker and more advanced than children who attend lessons each day. During the off week they are probably working hard with their hands. They come to their tasks keener and with brighter intellects than those who have followed the same course day after day. The training of the hand must be co-ordinate with that of the brain. Some of the most distinguished intellects of the century have been proficient in handicrafts.

IMPORTANT SCIENTIFIC EXPERIMENTS.

At the meeting of the Royal Society on Tuesday evening Professor Bragg outlined an experimental investigation of the nature of the Gamma rays made by Mr. J. P. V. Madson, D.Sc., and himself. Professor Bragg stated that the experiments had been entirely successful, and the results had been placed before the scientific world. So far no papers had been written attempting to disprove the basis of the experiments. Professor Rennie at the conclusion of the address congratulated the society on having gentlemen in their midst who could present such interesting papers as Professor Bragg and Dr. Madson had prepared. The importance of the experiments conducted by those gentlemen could not be wholly grasped by members of the society, owing to the modest way in which they had been presented. He, however, might say they would revolutionise thought in certain directions. It would be seen that so far only one criticism of the result had come to hand, and that had merely attacked a theory put forward by the experimentalists. So far the grounds of the discoveries had not been dealt with. The results of these experiments tended to disprove the basis, and therefore the theories, of a certain line of scientific procedure in connection with experiments with radium adopted by a large number of scientists, and he wondered at there being no attacks on the papers. He thought the reason was that the scientists were cornered. He congratulated Professor Bragg and Dr. Madson on their success.

Advertiser 16/4/06

ADELAIDE UNIVERSITY SCIENTIFIC SOCIETY.

A meeting of the Adelaide University Scientific Society was held on Monday night in the Prince of Wales lecture theatre at the University. A paper by Mr. H. W. Gartrell, M.A., B.Sc., on "Travels in America," was read. The president (Professor Chapman), in introducing the speaker, said he was a Tate medallist of the University, and had gained the Angas scholarship, by means of which he had travelled extensively in the United States and in Mexico. Mr. Gartrell, who was received with cheers, said the first work he did after landing in the United States of America was with pick and shovel alongside an Italian immigrant. He had studied at 15 different Universities in America, and so claimed a varied experience in the life of the American student. In most of the States there were free primary schools as in South Australia, free secondary schools, and free State and endowed Universities. The American "crammed" more than the average Australian student, and was not so athletic, golf being the only exercise enjoyed by most of the students. The American prosperity was largely a matter of the present as opposed to the future, as the timber forests were being cut down, and the coal gutted from the earth with restless haste, there being as much as 30 per cent. waste due to the methods by which the coal was raised. The speaker was not eulogistic over the character of the American. He described him as bound down by his business, and stubborn on any point on which he had been brought up to hold certain ideas. The lecturer described the climates of the various States and of Mexico, and gave a graphic description of his travels.

TEACHER AND PUPIL.

A Postponed Social.

It has been decided by the executive of the Teachers' Union to postpone till June the farewell social to Messrs. Whillas and Burgess, which was arranged for April 18. This course has been resolved upon in order to allow country teachers to attend. Many of them will be in the city in June on business connected with the annual conference.

Technical Education in Queensland.

In the Queensland Assembly last week the Technical Instruction Bill was reintroduced, and passed its second reading. Under this measure the Governor-in-Council is empowered to establish upon the premises of any technical college or elsewhere such additional educational institutions and training colleges as may be thought fit. An objector to the Bill said it was practically spoon-feeding Brisbane. Queensland, as all over the world, the brightest intellects came from the provinces, and these should be given advantages equal to the metropolis. Why, he asked, should the provincial taxpayers be called upon to provide a college free of charge in Brisbane, while they had to contribute one-fifth before they could get a college established in the country?

Speaking on this question, the Hon. P. Edquist said that a very unfortunate feature of Queensland, and, indeed, of the sister States, was the exodus of brains which went on from year to year. Talented individuals left for England for more training, and more of them stayed there than came back. Such a state of things should be stopped, and a wider, bigger field for their talents provided. The South Brisbane Technical College need have no serious rivals about the Central Technical College. It should be the care of good government to see the functions of such excellent institutions enlarged all over the State, and not only in the city. One of the great questions of the day was the necessity for impressing the work of education on young people. It was impossible to educate too much, although it was possible to educate in the wrong direction.

At the meeting of the council of the Brisbane Technical College it was reported that the general enrolment in the classes was excellent, and features more noticeable than in former years were the higher age and evident earnestness of the students. Ten free technical scholarships were advertised for the first time this year, two in each of the departments of art, business, engineering, science, mining, and women's work. The total in fees which these scholars would have paid was £200, and the Government promptly met the object of the council by granting endowment on the fees, as if they had actually been paid. The movement is the most important that has been made for some time in technical education in Queensland.

Nature Study at Grote-street.

Those interested in nature study—and who is not in these days?—may spend a delightful hour with Mr. Edquist, the enthusiastic nature study teacher at the Grote-street Continuation School. Though greatly hampered in consequence of the rebuilding operations he is nevertheless doing a most useful work, and the remarkable interest displayed by the students shows what a hold the study is taking on the enquiring mind. A lot of the work is done in classes, and when dealing with plant and animal life the specimens are not kept as a rule, especially if, in the case of the latter, the life habits are not completely understood. A fascinating feature of the work is the study carried on in connection with a permanent aquarium which has been established on a small scale. Mr. Edquist is avoiding any expensive apparatus, his intention being to show country teachers just what may be done with a minimum of expenditure. So for the purpose of his experiments he is working with common large glass jars, in which may be seen growing various kinds of water weeds "anchored" in a few inches of sand. The special object of this study is to present to the student the exact conditions under which plant life exists in the waters of our rivers and ponds. As the weeds are growing vigorously the experiments demonstrate that the weeds do not derive much of their nutriment from the soil. In each jar a certain amount of minute animal life may be seen, and by a mysterious process of nature the two forms of life so balance each other that both flourish, and the water remains absolutely fresh and sweet. In one jar three small fish—two trout and a perch—provide an interesting study in the breathing powers of an aquatic with a land animal. In yet another jar may be seen

a good growth of water weed, with the dragon fly in its larvae and nymph stages of life. As time goes on the students will look to see the nymphs ascend the reeds protruding from the water, and then if they are fortunate they will see the nymphs cast their shells and issue forth as beautiful dragon flies. Then in another part of the nature study room students are experimenting with various seeds, including the pine, artichoke, native honey-suckle, and the hawthorn, their intention being to observe the germinating stage. An experiment which another student is carrying on is demonstrating that lawn grass will not thrive in water, for the reason that it cannot adapt itself to the aquatic condition. One great and important result of the nature study class is seen in the establishment of home aquaria. Mr. Edquist estimates that fully 25 students have already made a start to study and experiment on their own account at their homes. He and the students are looking forward with a great deal of pleasure to the time when they will be able to make out-door excursions for the purpose of studying in a wider field. As soon as the April rains come the ponds and streams will swarm with aquatic life, and the students will then go out for nature study under more advantageous conditions.

New South Wales Notes.

The new regulations framed for the New South Wales department are giving general satisfaction, but strong objections have been urged against that regulation which refers to the promotion of teachers, and states that teachers must serve not less than four years in every grade of each class, dating from the first classification afforded him. It also raises the term of promotion for good service from five years to six. It is pointed out that the regulation is practically retrospective in its operations on teachers who have partially completed their examinations for a higher classification. The regulation affecting the maximum quota of schools in each class has also been discussed. The idea is entirely new in New South Wales, but the principle has been affirmed in Victoria. Under the new regulation there is a fixed limit to the number of each class of school, and although schools may increase in attendance sufficient to justify their elevation, they cannot be raised until a vacancy occurs once the maximum is reached. The departmental idea is that it affords a brake on the expansion of expenditure, and prevents the anomalous position formerly resulting from schools being raised in class on account of some temporary increase in attendance for, perhaps, only one quarter. It affords the public a guarantee that the expenditure bears a definite ratio to the number of children to be educated, for it may be laid down as a sound principle that the growth of expenditure should keep pace with the growth of the children to be educated. It is expected that very few cases of hardship will arise, as not only is there a fairly wide margin, but it is expected that the necessary 5,000 to necessitate a revision of the quota will be added every three years.

The enrolment of scholars in New South Wales during the year established a record, viz., 213,700.

Mr. A. Lobban, who has served as a teacher and inspector in the New South Wales Education Department for 45 years, has been granted a well-earned leave of absence prior to retirement. Mr. Lobban entered the service of the National Board of Education on July 1, 1863, when he was appointed to a small school at Croki, on the Manning River. He remained there for ten years, and his work was of such a striking character that he was next appointed to the Sussex-street, Sydney, school. Twenty years after he entered the service he received the appointment of inspector, and has done excellent work ever since.

The Victorian Service.

Many recent criticisms from press correspondents regarding service in the Education Department of Victoria have called from the Director of Education (Mr. F. Tate, M.A.) a detailed reply. With reference to the allegations of favoritism in the matter of promotion, he points out that all promotions are made by a committee of classifiers, one of whom is the Chief Inspector of Schools, another a teacher, selected by the teachers, and a third a person nominated by the Governor-in-Council. This committee, in preparing the classified roll, including the promotion list, makes use of the inspectors' records of teachers. Against every act of the classifiers a teacher who feels aggrieved, has the right of appeal to the Public Service Commissioner. Neither Minister nor Director can influence the classification of teachers one jot. Then, on the charge that teachers who refuse country appointments are passed over in the promotion list, he

points out that those who laid the foundations of the education system wisely insisted that country schools should be as efficient as those in the city, and that therefore a condition of advancement in the teaching service should be successful work in the country districts. If it were difficult to persuade a man to take up a school in a remote district, with promotion as a condition, it would be manifestly impossible to fill those schools if the department had no promotion to offer. The department intended to insist that country schools should be staffed as strongly as city schools, and therefore those who refused promotion because it entailed them leaving the city would necessarily be passed over.

School Strikes in Germany.

In order to combat the recent school strikes in the Polish-speaking districts of Posen, the German Government ordered a large number of young teachers from Rhenish Prussia to be transferred to the disturbed districts. This action was very much resented by the teachers, many of whom threatened to give up their profession. The object of the measure was twofold—to bring the disaffected districts to their senses by imposing an additional financial burden on them, and to afford some relief to the hard-pressed teachers in Posen, who had so long been standing in the forefront of the struggle for the Germanisation of the extreme east of Prussia. The only financial consideration given to the teachers who had been so hurriedly compelled to leave their familiar surroundings to undertake duties far from agreeable was that they were allowed a free railway journey home twice a year. The imported teachers were to retain the salaries to which they had a claim. As these were 400 marks higher than the salaries paid to teachers in Posen, some little jealousy has arisen between the two classes of teachers.

SCHOOL, and pupils at engaged in the day. could not turn had the expense of a master the school systematic trainer, mason, and a little for the ver, or soap in department; sely enough in d does not reason from them. he British Education some time ago to the intense the education feel that their about technical people are to be rough the me- I do the see out they argue it is far more the people ort in pri- ortunates who n or none at their living." of the Mel- has suggested ling with the The responsi- apprentice- ouse of train- art of the an- imination; ad- ing aprnti e- Wages Board." upon an appren- doned; and, as t in The Edu- l is far more of the skilled nti eship; it invented and is of managing ad places them nstaking expla- on the other y direct por- sity of the em- ed that in cou- school of the der a complete o the Cont'ua- be a depart- to take up ould not need more practical geometrical de- assed through ad could either e firm to learn instruction at or be able to n at the school

cds. April 11th. 05.