

Registered 9/5/07.

MUSIC EXAMINATIONS.

To the Editor.

Sir—I observed a paragraph in a recent issue of The Register stating that the London College of Music were going to hold examinations in this State, and had appointed a local examiner. The following facts about this institution cannot be too widely known, and I trust the teachers in Adelaide will take steps to expose it. I have before me a pamphlet "On Musical Examinations," price 6d., being extracts of articles, correspondence, and police news from The Musical News, The Musical Times, The Times, The Standard, and The Daily Telegraph, and letters from leading musicians in England. The London College of Music, Limited, has no charter to give degrees or certificates of any kind. According to the Public Registrar, Somerset House, its enormous capital is £100. The actual amount is £10 in 10 shares. The shareholders are A. G. Holmes, A. I. Caldicott, F. J. Karn, H. E. Radcliffe, Sam Smith, and W. I. Westbrook. The examiners are generally paid by results. Mr. A. T. Froggatt, Mus. Doc., Dublin, on October 22, 1898, wrote to leading papers that—"It cannot be too well known that this so-called college is a thoroughly discredited affair. The eminent musicians who at one time permitted their names to be used have long since withdrawn such permission." On April 9, 1896, at the Marlborough Street Police Court, the proprietors were fined £14 for omitting the word "limited" from their prospectus and circulars. Several musicians write saying their names were used without their permission. Other teachers and musicians in various parts of England write informing the public that they have resigned the position of examiners and local agents, as they have not understood the nature of the concern. A gentleman in Perth received a letter from the above concern offering the title of "Licentiate" without examination, and for a small fee, and suggesting that he should at once give the order for the "rich and handsome robes specially designed for the comfort of the wearer." At the Leeds Assizes the secretary (T. W. Holmes) admitted, under cross-examination, that the college had given some diplomas without examination on payment of £1 3/6 in fees; but the certificates stated that it was "after examination." A notice from the L.P.C. contains the following amusing millinery item:—"Licentiates are allowed to use robes, hood, and gown of college, specially designed by an eminent firm of ecclesiastical robe makers; best materials, hood black corded silk, special shape, lined throughout with silk of a delicate colour!" The British law allows anybody, even a shoeblack, to give diplomas away. Tailors, shopkeepers, lawyers, clerks, &c., and people of all trades are actually engaged all over England giving diplomas and certificates; notices are continually appearing in county papers of examinations and certificates gained in the district at local examinations of the Royal College of Music. The Royal College write to say that it was not their affair, and that appears to be all they can do. The above L.R.C. have recently given the certificate for the intermediate grade of violin playing to a Salvation Army musician, to a girl aged 54 years in Sydney. The place is swamped with teachers who have less music and education than a scullery maid. Shall we presently have them all walking round as Mus. Bac.'s with the above "fetching" robes?

I am, Sir, &c., C. BARTON.

Port Pirie, May 6.
[Mr. R. Correll, local representative of the society named, comments thus upon Mr. Barton's letter:—"I am not at present sufficiently acquainted with the affairs of the institution to refute the statements, but I have seen and read notices and paragraphs in English papers quite at variance with these assertions, and I accepted the local agency for this college fully believing that it was a genuine, straightforward, legitimate institution. I will send a copy of this letter to the Australasian organizer of the college; possibly he may be able to throw some more light on the subject. One story is good till another is told."—Ed.]

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JAMESTOWN, May 8.—At a meeting of the committee of the local centre in connection with the University of Adelaide extension lectures it was decided, in conjunction with the institute committee, to adopt the proposal of the University Council to hold a course at the local centres, and that Professor Henderson, M.A., should deliver one of his lectures. The committee are conferring with the Port Pirie centre regarding the time for the delivering of lecture.

happiness, both in quantity and quality. To a broad recognition of these facts is largely due the fine expansion of the Adelaide School of Mines and the gradual extension of affiliated institutions in the country. It is, however, abundantly clear that the School of Mines has outgrown the original idea upon which it was founded; for the name is singularly inappropriate in Adelaide, where the mining department is only a relatively small portion of the whole, and is merely one among several important departments; but the title is ludicrous in such a place, for example, as Mount Gambier, where there is nothing approaching any mining course whatever. Certainly the full appellation is "School of Mines and Industries," but the latter words are rarely used; and what would be thought of a dog that carried its head where its tail should be? One suggestion for correcting this misnomer is to call the establishment the "Royal Technical Institute," a title which, it is urged, would be expressive and accurate, and would lend itself to the affiliation with local schools with many and varied objects and specialties. The aim in all cases would be the spread of technical instruction and information. But why "Royal?" We have already a legion of royal this, that, and the other society or institution; and, besides, have we not been impressed from our youth upward that "there is no 'royal' road to learning!" Another objection to the proposed label is that the word "Institute" is fairly appropriated locally by an educational agency affiliated with the Public Library. Probably "Technical College" would meet the requirements of the case, as indicating a position between and distinctive from the elementary schools and the University. The affiliated institutions could be termed "Technical Schools." The name is, however, a minor matter in comparison with the reform which the Mount Gambier School of Mines has been invited to consider.

In the latest annual report of the Moonta School of Mines, Dr. T. James, the enthusiastic President of that institution, directs attention to the need for the co-ordination of technical instruction in the State. After showing that the local school was of immense value to the young men of the Peninsula mining towns—in 1906 the number of students had increased from 321 to 556—he says:—

While the principal School of Mines is in Adelaide, there is a limited number of similar institutions scattered about the country, thus showing that the State recognises in a measure at least its duty towards technical and industrial education. There is need for more technical schools; and, when the Government has more money available for educational purposes, it can be well spent in establishing a larger number, and in making the schools already in existence still more efficient. Those already established have passed the embryo stage; and it is becoming more and more important that their syllabuses, methods, and systems of instruction should possess more uniformity. To attain that end affiliation of the whole of the schools will have to be effected, when a common basis for instruction shall become possible, and uniformity in the examination standards can be fixed. The certificates awarded by the whole of these schools after examination based on common standards will then be of equal value.

It is true, as Dr. James remarks, that some plan of this nature must before long be matured, and it should not be needlessly delayed; for not only is the interest of the students concerned, but the quality and thoroughness of the work of the schools should be maintained at a reasonable standard. The

shortest method of reaching the end in view would be to make the central authority an examining body for the whole of the schools. The votes of funds for each branch should be separately fixed by Parliament, and not determined by the Adelaide Council or by it conjointly with others, as the latter course would be a fruitful source of trouble. Indeed, there is no need for central control in the matter of finance or fees, or in the appointments of staff, or of managing body, or course of study. All that is wanted can be attained simply by unifying the examination, and restricting the issue of diplomas and certificates to the head source.

The Adelaide School of Mines has power under its Act to make regulations to effect the purpose indicated; but the country schools have, it is stated, hitherto been too jealous of any interference to render it wise to move in the matter. Now, however, that a demand has been virtually made by one of the most influential of the country institutions for the exercise of the power, surely in a case of so much mutual advantage to the central and local managers—not to mention other and more pressing considerations—there should be hesitation no longer. Further, it is not necessary to go at present. Some folk favour bringing all technical teaching under the Education Department, thus abolishing all Schools of Mines Councils in town and country. Where the education is common to all walks in life, State control may be expedient; but where the pupils begin to specialize with a view to a distinct trade or profession, boards and councils are more desirable, so that the expert knowledge and the experience of those in the trade or profession may be utilized in the supervision of educational arrangements. The University can do its work far better than a Government department could do it, and so can the Council of the School of Mines, whether in the city or the country. One great drawback of State control in relation to centralized education organization is that, if it does not alienate public sympathy, it fails to attract popular co-operation in any large degree, and popular co-operation is essential to technical instruction under a purely voluntary system. There must be local enthusiasm, if only to induce the young people to abandon in their own interest the Academy of the Street Corner. Still, without sacrificing the great principle of local individuality, spontaneous effort, and emulous enthusiasm, much may be done in the direction of co-ordinating and simplifying our educational agencies generally. Not only in connection with technical instruction is the condition one approaching to chaos. In other branches are duplications of work, divisions of authority, and loss of efficiency. While it should have been the task of Ministers of Education in the past to conserve the dissipated energy, unfortunately the portfolio which was the latest created, has been too often regarded as a Cabinet tag, a sort of genteel clerical employment for a Minister not specially fitted for a practical office, a post which required mainly a talent for flowery speeches and letting things drift. But now the time has come when the political head of the Educational Department should display even special business ability and business organization.