

# The Register

ADELAIDE: FRIDAY, AUGUST 16, 1912.

## TEACHERS AND PUPILS.

Admiration for the industry and zeal with which the Education Commission is prosecuting its labours may soon be attended with dismay regarding the increasingly formidable character of its tasks and the time for their performance. The commission is deeply conscious of the seriousness of its duties, and its investigation of every question affecting national education in all its branches will apparently be so exhaustive and minute as to occasion the fear that the enquiry will be practically interminable, or that, when the commission may have completed its present programme, strong reasons will have arisen—owing to change of conditions and the development of new educational ideas—for conducting a fresh examination into the subject. The commission was appointed on January 26, 1911, to enquire into and report upon higher education and the University of Adelaide. In September the scope of its work was extended to "all branches of education"—a field which might occupy a lifetime to roam over. This step warranted the postponement of a new and comprehensive Education Bill, containing several provisions which the then responsible Minister and expert officials of the department deemed urgently necessary to ensure that South Australian children shall not educationally lag behind those of other States. So far as it has gone the commission has not dealt with the more crucial and important matters affecting either higher, secondary, or primary instruction. Its chief recommendations involve larger demands on the Treasury.

The third progress report, which was presented to Parliament on Thursday, affords no promise that the Legislature will this session be in a position to pass an Education Bill. For at least another year, therefore, the compulsory system will remain defective relatively to private schools, children generally will not be required to attend so regularly as is desirable, and they will be free to leave school a year sooner than the age which the best authorities regard as the minimum for release from school attendance. Since submitting its second progress report the commission held 37 meetings and examined 25 witnesses. Visits were paid to New South Wales and Queensland, and evidence was taken from representatives of all branches of primary education in those States. A mass of information was collected, and the qualifications of the Commissioners to discuss education questions were probably much enhanced; but the recommendations embodied in the report are little more than a repetition of advice tendered by local educationists who closely study their business. Everybody will endorse the self-evident proposition that "the success of any education system depends in a large measure on its teaching staff." The existing difficulty in obtaining

suitable teachers will be accentuated in future unless the profession shall be made more attractive, for one may assume that, as the Commonwealth advances in population and wealth, commerce and industries will offer an increasing number of "plums" to ambitious and clever youths. It would be unfortunate if, as in some States in America, primary school teaching were left mostly to the fair sex. South Australian schools must command the services of competent men of high character, who will permanently influence the destinies of her usually high-spirited boys. By increasing the salaries of teachers of both sexes who are now receiving less than £250 a year the Government might fairly expect to secure a more qualified and contented staff. It is particularly desirable that young men should be enabled to marry and establish homes. Ability to do this comparatively early in life would be a decided compensation for deprivation of speculative chances later in life in the commercial sphere. In view of the commission's remarks on the recommendation to rearrange the classification of schools and reduce the number of classes from nine to six, it should have advised that head masters might attain a salary of £500 a year. That amount is paid in Victoria and New South Wales, and in Western Australia the highest salary is £521 10/. By raising the status of the few men in the forefront the Government would uplift the whole service and attract to it aspiring youths who now pass it by.

The abolition of the title "provisional" and the attendant improvement of status will be an act of fairness to many persons in the "back blocks" who deserve special sympathy and consideration on account of their isolation.

If for nothing else. Popular opinion—especially that of the parents of more or less nervous or "flurried" children—already approves of the proposal that inspectors should be relieved of the duty of examining for promotion, and that this work should be performed by the teachers of all schools simultaneously. The reasons for the proposed appointment of a lady inspector are not so plain. Surely the present inspectors—if relieved of "examining" duties—may be trusted to devote additional attention, if necessary, to investigating the conditions in which lady teachers work and live, and to report upon girls' domestic studies. If not, how is one lady inspector to accomplish the whole of this work satisfactorily? Regarding the medical inspection of school children, South Australia is evidently doing less than any of the other States, and the commission is convinced that the need for action here is as great as in other parts of the Commonwealth, and that the results from the work will be of the greatest advantage. The compulsory military training law strengthens the case outlined; and, in the circumstances, the appointment of a medical officer and two trained nurses, as the beginning of a system of medical inspection, ought not to be unduly delayed. The system to be adopted, however, should not ordinarily relieve parents of the natural obligation to care for their children's health.

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Professor Ellington has resigned his position as Professor of History and Political Economy in the Melbourne University, and his resignation has been accepted. It is the intention of the council to divide the Chair of History and Political Economy, and appoint two professors, one to the Chair of History, and one to the Chair of Economics.

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## UNIVERSITY BUILDINGS.

Dr. William Barlow, Vice-Chancellor of the Adelaide University, writes:—"With reference to recent suggestions that the buildings of the University of Adelaide ought to be on some site outside the city, may I ask that the hospitality of your columns may be extended to a statement made by the Earl of Rosebery in his address delivered on July 2 to the Congress of Universities of the Empire in the great hall of the University of London? Representatives from 53 universities in the British Empire were present. The noble Earl, who is Chancellor of the Universities of London and Glasgow, and Lord Rector of the University of Aberdeen, is reported in The Morning Post of July 3, 1912, to have said in the course of his address:—"Now the feature that must strike all of us here today is the immense growth in number of the universities of the Empire. To what is this marvellous increase due? Well, I think we may say it is due to an immense demand and an immense need. It is not due especially, as our older universities were due, to the instincts of the pious and generally ecclesiastical founders. The development in our universities has taken a totally different turn. Formerly, had new universities been founded, the founders would probably have chosen the sequestered solitude of some cathedral city like Wells or Canterbury, so as to attract those youths who demanded learning, and who should be kept free, in the cloister, from too free an intercourse with the world; but the new universities are totally different. They meet the demand of great cities which require that they should be situated in their very midst, and that these universities should meet the demands of their communities. That, I think, is a great and instructive feature of this development of the university system. Oxford and Cambridge satisfied the wants of England for centuries, and nobly they did their work; but through the increasing complications of our civilization, together with the increase of our population, our commerce, and our wealth, it was felt that these two universities could no longer do for us what we require, and every great city seems to consider it a matter of pride and a necessary appurtenance to its own position that it should hold a university within its walls. I have pointed out a moment ago how many universities have been founded in the last 70 years, but in the 12 years of the twentieth century that have already passed in England alone no fewer than five universities have been founded. That surely is a remarkable and striking feature of our times, and that has been going on all over the Empire."

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## PERTH UNIVERSITY.

PERTH, August 21.

More than half the medical practitioners in the metropolitan district have petitioned the Senate of the Western Australian University against its decision to accept the Point Crawley Reserve as a site for university buildings.