well in a private institution to insist upon
the most improved methods of instruction
in the most recondite fields of learning,
but the State's concern is not to turn out
scholars, but to give children an opportu-
nity of becoming useful citizens. We
should, therefore, look to the State schools
for proficiency in the rudiments of learn-
ing. If they gain certificates of excellence
in higher branches, so much the better;
but we must insist upon a proper atten-
tion to the three R's. Now, unfortu-
nately, we do not find that the pupils
of our State schools are so far advanced in
these as to warrant their attention being
directed to what are called accomplish-
ments. As compared with 1887, reading,
writing, and spelling have each im-
proved. Arithmetic, however, is even
worse than it was last year. On
all sides it is agreed that extra
attention should be paid to this particular
subject, which, somehow or another, is
beyond the grasp of the Australian
intellect. Why should it be? Our
children are by no means less smart than
their fellows in Europe. Is there any-
thing wrong with the teaching, or are the
examiners too exacting? We confess
that we should sooner hear of an im-
provement in this branch of know-
ledge amongst the pupils of our State
schools than of the spreading of
a mere smattering of facts about natural
science. On the whole, however, the
report is satisfactory. The children are
being taught well, and gradually the
teachers are being improved in respect of
ability. Even as they are the colony has
reason to be proud of them, and of the
schools which they officer. Both teachers
and inspectors are making every effort to
progress in the path which seems to them
best fitted to lead to perfection. It would
not be correct to say that the inspectors
are to be commended for the reports
which they make. These are, beyond a
doubt, most long-winded and verbose
arrangements. They say in a page what
a person who is not an inspector would
say in a paragraph, and it might be well
for the Minister to consider whether or
not their reports should be cut down
within reasonable dimensions.

For report see page 96.
THE SCHOOL OF MINES.

The School of Mines and Industries was formally opened by the Governor on Saturday. The large and interested audience present on the occasion testified to the high regard in which this important enterprise is held, and even if we allow that some of the thousands came to see and to be seen, the vast majority was plainly on account of those who believe in technical education and in the latest means secured for its furtherance. The prophet of the cause explained in an eloquent speech the objects of the School. It would require a man of even greater ingenuity than Dr. Cockburn to say in speech to the people something truly which has not been said before on the subject of technical education.

If he were addressing an assemblage of experts he would doubtless be able to advance arguments of more or less newness, but speaking to people who believe in his presence that they believed in the system, he very wisely refrained from trying to persuade them of the truth and value of what they already held to be valuable and true. We heartily congratulate the Council of the School on the success which they have achieved. The opinions we have entertained regarding the expectations have been more than realized. Instead of the few students for whom they made mental provision they have now nearly 100 in active work, and when shortly the classes for artisans shall have been opened they will reckon their number at least twofold or threifold. Much of the success which has attended their efforts is of course due to the public sense of the need of such an Institution. Much also is due to the energy and public spirit displayed by the Technical Education Association and consequently by the Council of the School. But most of the success is due to the Chairman of the Council, Dr. Cockburn, who has devoted himself heart and soul to the work. In so doing he has conferred a great benefit on his Country. That Council is regarded by the public as the moving spirit, and none of his colleagues will grudge him the public recompense of especial gratitude.

If Dr. Cockburn makes any mistake in his public remarks about the School, it lies in his tendency to make defintions. Within he week or two or three months ago he calmly defined technical education to be "useful education," and proceeded to support his definition by claiming that "useful education" was a thing of modern growth. We are pleased to note that he has totally changed his definition now. It would be unpleasant to think that people were not usefully educated until somebody instituted technical schools, and some would be inclined to doubt the advisability of applying the expression "useful education" exclusively to instruction in the mechanical branches of knowledge. Dr. Cockburn's latest definition, though still rather unsatisfactory, is an improvement on the old. Technical education, he says, is "such work as would fit students for the work of..."