

Exemption Schools.

As I am dealing with recent developments in the department, the exemption of certain schools from a detailed examination by the inspector is an event of such importance as to demand some consideration. There is no doubt that the rigid and searching examinations of the past, with all the laborious testing of the whole year's work in every writing and drawing book, were useful in their day; probably they were necessary. Any system must be judged by its fruits, and it must be conceded that the examinations had a stimulating effect on the teachers and scholars, and greatly improved the standard of the work. Wholesome rivalry and emulation were created, and there was a constant incentive to excel. But there was a danger of excessive strain on the part of both teachers and children. It is probable that the plan was open to the objection that it produced a distorted, imperfect idea of the teacher's real mission, and an inferior aim in regard to his work. That in the anxiety to "gain 90 per cent. and earn the encomium of excellent" there was a possibility that the real work of the teacher to develop the minds and characters of the pupils might be overshadowed. We cannot too often be reminded that our great work after all is to form character. Our aim should be not only to train the faculties of the children, so that they may become quick to see, to observe accurately, to be skilful and resourceful, but also to form character, to make men and thus in the truest sense be the "builders of the state." I do not say that this was not possible under the result system, but certainly there was a danger of these nobler and more important aims being sacrificed to the Moloch of a high percentage. The great question, after all, is which plan will result in the greatest advantage to the children. In the administration of the exemption scheme I think it would be injudicious to reduce the inspectorial supervision of the schools. The great importance of the work, especially in view of the interests of the children, and remembering also the large expenditure at stake, demands that the inspection should be frequent and thorough. But it is probable that the energies of the inspectors may be employed to much more advantage than under the old system. The visits of the inspectors should be as frequent as possible, and the wise counsels of these gentlemen, as well as their careful testing and criticism of methods, should be most stimulating and helpful to the teachers. I do not think that we are yet ripe for a universal adoption of the exemption system. It is advisable, I think, to still restrict it to such schools as have shown themselves by excellent work to be worthy of the distinction. Thus this "hall-mark" of excellence may be used as a stimulus to teachers to raise their schools to a high standard of proficiency. It is a worthy goal for their ambition.

The New Regulations.

You will all expect that I should make some reference to the 1903 regulations. I have taken pains to ascertain the views of the teachers, and to find out how they are affected by these regulations. In making these enquiries I have received most valuable assistance from my executive. In what I say I not only express my own convictions, but I most unmistakably voice the feelings of the general body of teachers. While deeming it my duty (a duty I owe to the general public as well as to the teachers) to refer to this subject, I desire to do so in a fair and temperate and respectful manner. First of all, a word of congratulation. Very great credit is due to the committee who met last Christmas, and we are grateful to them for much that they accomplished. In particular I may say we keenly appreciate the provision that the 1902 salaries are to be enjoyed by those previously in receipt of them. But there is no doubt that a general feeling of dissatisfaction exists among the teachers in regard to the new classification scheme. Many of our enthusiastic and successful young men are much depressed. They feel that their prospects for advancement, which always in the past acted as a stimulus and encouragement, and fanned the flame of enthusiasm—these prospects, I say, have been blocked, and there is a danger that the hopefulness and enthusiasm which are

indispensable to work of the highest value will be in a great degree crushed. Surely no one will doubt in these days of progress and keen competition the vast importance of the teachers' work. This has been most effectively shown in the able addresses previously delivered here, and I need not take up your time in elaborating the point. Are not the prosperous and progressive countries of the world those who are liberal in their education policy. Some of these countries spend as much as one-third of their revenue in education, and who will contend that this is a bad investment? Are not such countries as the United States, Germany, and Switzerland splendid object lessons to show that a generous expenditure on education is amply justified by its results? Just as the greatest boon an individual parent can give to his children is a good education, so one of the greatest blessings the parent state can confer on its citizens is to make such provision in the matter of education as to give equal opportunities for all. Thus many a promising, brilliant child, aided by this beneficent provision, will so develop his powers that the pathetic lines of Gray—"Full many a flower is born to blush unseen, and waste its sweetness on the desert air"—so true in the past in the old land, will not apply to these bright, southern lands. It is important to bear in mind, when comparing the expenditure in our state with Victoria, that the present low salaries in our sister state were fixed at a period of almost hopeless financial depression, and do not at all represent what should be paid under normal conditions.

A Brighter Outlook.

Our teachers have borne reductions and adverse conditions when the times have been unpropitious. But, fortunately, there is now a brighter outlook. The long drought has broken up at last, and we may reasonably hope that the cycle of prosperous seasons and abundant harvests has commenced. In this the whole state will participate, and we rejoice that to many there will be a return of prosperity. Under these more favourable conditions may we not hope that the classification scheme may be so revised that the emoluments offered to the teachers and the opportunities for promotion may be such as to restore hopefulness and ambition to our young men now in the service, and also to attract into our ranks that desirable class of teachers so essential to the future success of education in this land? There are other aspects of this important subject which might be dwelt upon, but the whole question will be presented for your consideration during the session of the conference. It is by far the most important question that will claim your attention, and I ask you to devote yourselves most earnestly to its consideration. The conference may be regarded as the teachers' parliament, and it affords us an excellent opportunity to discuss subjects affecting our interests and the general advancement of the great work to which we have devoted our lives. In closing, I desire most heartily to thank my officers and the members of the executive for their valuable assistance and the splendid services they have rendered during my term of office. (Applause.)

The New Regulations Criticised.

Mr. C. Bronner moved a vote of thanks to the President for his excellent address, and congratulated Mr. Burnard upon the vigour of his arguments. Mr. J. J. Stephens seconded the motion.

Mr. W. Hand contended that the 1903 regulations were not conducive to progress, and they would not be taken up with enthusiasm by the teachers. (Applause.)

Mr. W. Ham said the majority of the members of the committee appointed to consider the regulations were strongly opposed to them. (Hear, hear.) He could assure them that an active hostile campaign would be conducted against them.

Mr. H. Billingham said classics were not given sufficient prominence in their curriculum. It was the finest feature of their system. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. T. Lave argued that the present method of conducting examinations was unsatisfactory. Under it they could not possibly gauge the true worth of the pupil or the teacher.

The motion was carried with enthusiasm.

Interstate Greetings.

Mr. C. Charlton reported having received warm greetings from the State School Teachers' Association and the Head Masters' Association of Victoria, and the Western Australian Teachers' Association. He moved—"That this union heartily reciprocates the fraternal greetings received from the sister states of New South Wales, Victoria, and Western Australia."

Mr. J. Donnell seconded. Carried.

At the School of Mines.

In the afternoon, at the invitation of the President (Mr. Sir Langdon Bonython) and Lady Bonython and the council, the members of the union visited the School of Mines and Industries on North terrace. There was a large and fashionable gathering. Among those present were Lady Way and Lieut. Sinclair Blue, the Premier (Hon. J. G. Jenkins) and Mrs. Jenkins, the Speaker of the House of Representatives (Sir Frederick Holder) and Lady Holder, the Attorney-General (Hon. J. H. Gordon) and Mrs. Gordon, Sr. Sir John Downer and Lady Downer, Sr. Charleston, the Mayor of Adelaide (Mr. Cohen, M.P.), Mrs. Cohen, and Miss Cohen, Messrs. R. Kyllin Thomas, W. J. Sowden, the Under Treasurer (Mr. T. Gill, F.S.O.), Professor Bragg, M.A., and members of Parliament and of the Adelaide City Council. Nearly an hour was spent in an interesting inspection of the different departments of industry, where the visitors heard the music of oiled machinery, inhaled the pungent atmosphere of the cloud-enveloped laboratory, and listened to the incessant click, click, of the dressmakers' scissors. The various classes were in charge of the following principals:—Mechanical engineering, Mr. W. H. Ledger; metallurgy, Mr. J. Crowther; engineering and drawing classes, Mr. J. L. Smith; physics, Mr. J. Darby; mining, Mr. R. W. Chapman; bookbinding, Mr. C. Webb; woodturning, Mr. W. E. Leask; bookkeeping, Mr. J. S. Brooks; preparatory school, Mr. A. Ferguson; chemistry, Mr. E. Hooper; mineralogy, Mr. W. Howchin; cookery, Mrs. Lloyd; dressmaking, Mrs. Auld; typewriting and shorthand, Miss B. Leeworthy.

After a tour of the imposing building Sir Langdon and Lady Bonython received their guests in Brookman's Hall, and refreshments were then handed around. A programme of music was supplied by Lotie's String Band, and the catering arrangements were efficiently carried out by Mr. F. Bricknell. The function was a complete success.

THE OPENING CEREMONY.

In the Town Hall in the evening the public opening took place. There was a large and distinguished attendance. His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor presided. On the platform were seated the Premier (Hon. J. G. Jenkins), the Attorney-General and Minister of Education (Hon. J. H. Gordon), the Treasurer (Hon. R. Butler), Mr. Brooker, M.P., an ex-Minister of Education, the Inspector-General of Schools (Mr. L. W. Stanton), the President (Mr. R. J. Burnard), and members of the committee of the Teachers' Union, members of the senate and professors of the University, and Mr. W. J. Sowden. Prior to the opening ceremony the City Organist (Mr. W. B. Pybus) rendered several selections on the organ, and as His Excellency and Lady Way entered the hall he played the national anthem. During the evening the Sturt Street School Choir, conducted by the head master (Mr. W. J. McBride), sang "Sweet and low" and "Ye banks and braes."

His Excellency, who was well received, said that on Wednesday next they would have the joy of giving a loyal welcome to the new Governor, Sir George Le Hunte. They were as pleased as he was at the birthday gift he had received from the King. They looked upon it as an honour not merely for the Governor, but for every citizen in South Australia. (Applause.) They recognised that there was a fitness in his beginning his official labours on the following day with the opening of Parliament. It was not altogether unsuitable that his own ninth administration should conclude with the honour of opening the Teachers' Parliament. (Applause.) During the week three Parliaments would be in session—the federal, their own state, and the schoolmasters'. The interest that was taken in the work of the last of the three was manifested by that large and representative gathering, and it could bear comparison with other in importance of the subjects it had to discuss, in the decorum and dignity of its proceedings, or in the loftiness of its ideals or the disinterestedness of its patriotism. (Applause.) Five years ago he had an honour similar to that which was that evening enjoying. Then the subject which he addressed his audience upon was the effort which had been made by the University of Adelaide to give a complete academic and professional and special training to all the candidates of the teaching profession in Adelaide free of charge, and without adding a sixpence to the burdens of the taxpayers. (Applause.) That offer was accepted, and effect was given to it in January, 1900, and he ventured to assert that there was no event in the history of education in South Australia of far more-reaching importance than the incident to which he had referred. (Renewed applause.) It secured to every teacher in South Australia, to every one of that important public service, the social status to which they were entitled. It secured to them a professional training of a high class, and some of the benefits of the endowments of the University of Adelaide. He knew of no other University in the world

in which the advantages of free compulsory training were given to the candidates for the teachers' profession. In that respect South Australia not only led the van, but stood alone among all the nations of the civilized world. (Applause.) In bringing about that result they would recognise the credit due to several whom he would name. First of all to their lamented and honoured friend, Sir Thomas Elder, whose munificent benefactions enabled the University to undertake the burden to which he had referred; secondly, to his friends Professors Bragg and Mitchell, who had the knowledge to enable them to discern the defects in the then existing system of training and the keen insight to seize the psychological moment in which those defects could be repaired; thirdly, to the Board of Inspectors and the staff of the Education Department, to the President and members of the union, and to the rank and file of the teaching profession for the generous and patriotic support they had given to the proposal; lastly, among all the members of the Governments who had helped them the Minister of the Crown whom he would specially mention for his statesmanlike grasp of the position and his determination to act was Mr. Batchelor. (Applause.) They were all familiar with the system of University examinations and University extension. Those both emanated from the venerable seminaries of the Old World. The pupil teacher system was also prevalent in England—four years in practical teaching and two years in a training college. Then first the Universities of Scotland and afterwards the Universities of England opened their gates to furnish not only technical training, but a broad and liberal education to the elementary teaching profession. He had looked at the last edition of the supplement to the Encyclopaedia Britannica, and in the article on education the author said that public opinion in England demanded three things of the Universities—first, that the function of the elementary school teacher should be recognised as one of the learned professions bracketed with law, medicine, and theology; second, that the University should provide a professor of didactics; and third, the University should institute examinations for all students who had passed through the required course for the purpose of authenticating them for the profession. Those requirements had not been complied with in the mother country, but they had been complied with in South Australia alone. (Applause.) So far from the teaching provided for elementary school teachers being sufficient in the mother country or in Scotland last year 2,400 teachers became entitled to certificates, and only a half of them had passed through the training colleges or day colleges for teachers in the University. In Germany the elementary school teachers received their education in training college for teachers. Those institutions were thoroughly equipped, but they did not meet the aspirations of the leaders of education in that empire. Professor Rein, of Jena, one of the greatest educational authorities in the world, complained that the training college in Germany had led to professional narrowness and to the isolation of the students from the great stream of generous and liberal learning flowing through that country. He advocated that the 3,000 students in the training college should be sent to strengthen the great secondary schools of the country, and a supplementary course should be provided for their benefit at the University. Professor Rein said education was not to be monopolized by the upper classes, but it belonged to the people as a whole. (Applause.) What was wanted in Germany was accomplished in South Australia. (Hear, hear.) In America there was a kindergarten and elementary school available for every child. In every town and in a good many rural districts there were free secondary schools, and west and south of Pennsylvania the Universities were free to the students and in all states except one, and in all territories except two there were free normal schools for the teachers. The great defect of the system was that the Universities had not woken up to the necessity of training teachers for elementary schools. In New South Wales for four years the pupil teachers' system existed and each year 45 students were ent-

from the training college to the University for two years' training. The students did remarkably well, but in consequence of a difficulty between the department and the University the good system was abandoned. There were, however, indications that it was to be revived. When last he addressed them the training of teachers was in a deplorable plight in Victoria. The training college had been closed, and nothing in the nature of secondary or higher education was being supplied to the candidates. Better counsels now prevailed, and they were palatially housed in the University ground. The head of the education system there was Mr. Tait, a man with considerable enthusiasm, indefatigable energy, and marvellous skill. (Applause.) Mr. Tait evidently looked for better things, and in the not far distant future the State of Victoria would have to learn a salutary lesson from the educational department in South Australia. (Applause.) In that brief review he hoped he had satisfied them that he was not inaccurate in stating that there was no other country in the world in which the University provided for candidates in elementary school teacher-ship a free, a compulsory, and a liberal education. He wished to direct their attention to a few facts about the old system. He did not hesitate to say that there was no educationist in the hall who would disagree with him when he said that it was an inadequate system. (Hear, hear.) The pupil teacher had four years' work in the schools, and got as much education as a kind head master gave him in out of school hours. There was one year's so-called training at the Training College. When they came to look at that year they would see that it was only half a year, because it meant that the teacher spent alternate weeks at the Grote Street School and the Training College. In making that statement he was not reflecting upon his honoured and lamented friend, Mr. J. A. Hartley. (Applause.) That great leader did his best with the money at his disposal. It was a compromise, and no doubt not a day of his life passed in which he was not grieved at the inadequate provision made by the educational authorities in South Australia. They must give credit to the energy and enthusiasm of that gentleman, and the successful masters of the Training College, Col. Madley and Mr. Scott. They must not forget that there were two or three heroic men who, in spite of those disadvantages, succeeded in their work. (Applause.) He wanted to tell them shortly what the present system was. It involved two years at the pupil teachers' school, the aim there being to educate candidates for the senior standard of the University. There were two years' work at the schools, and out of school lessons in the science of teaching, as well as practical experience from the head master. Then, again, there were two years at the University, and the subjects the department very properly insisted on for the after benefits of the teacher were psychology, English language and literature, mathematics, physics and chemistry, and up to the senior standard in Greek and Latin. There was practical teaching for two years in schools in the city and suburbs and drawing lessons in the art schools on North terrace. Every one after examining that course would admit that it furnished a strong and liberal scheme of education. It had been further improved by the appointment of a superintendent of teachers. Mr. Scott was always there. (Applause.) No better man could have been selected for the task. His learning and enthusiasm and untiring zeal had been one of the most important factors in the great success of the system. He would like to mention also Mr. Scott's substitute, Mr. Milton Manghan. They began in 1900 with 27 students. In three and a half years they had had 96 students; next year the number would be 60 or 70. Very few of the students who had been working hitherto had had the advantage of the Pupil Teachers' College, and yet during the three and a half years the system had been in operation the students, taking them on the average, had taken two and a half subjects out of the six that were necessary for the University degree; two of them in two years had taken five of the six subjects which the University curriculum gave three years to accomplish. (Applause.) The University was getting good value for its money. In 1900 four of the students were marked as prize accesserants for the John Howard Clarke literature prize, the best prize for English in the University; and last year one of the training students divided that prize with another of the students. He would mention one or two advantages to the students. They got the advantage of training at the University for two years, which in the aggregate amount of fees would total about £1,400. That was to say that the University presented the students with £1,400. They had the assistance of 14 professors and lecturers and four demonstrators. They had the use of a library of 15,000 volumes, and laboratories which had cost £10,000. They were the pioneer in breaking down the narrowness and exclusiveness of class alone, and demanded that the teacher was as much a member of the learned professions as the doctor and the lawyer. (Applause.) They had on a small scale the University pool continuation school in those who were working in the evenings for the completion of the course and to obtain the authorization of the University degree. There were also advantages to the University. It had been said that the training students were a drag on the others. That remark was made by a professor in Melbourne who had never been in Adelaide, and did not understand the work. On the contrary, the University professors recognised the industry and enthusiasm of the training students as an incentive to the others and also recognised the inspiration of numbers in their classes. Moreover, those students would spread the influence of the University all over the land; each teacher who was working for a degree would be a centre from which love for the University would radiate among all whom he met. Then there were the advantages to the state. It was asked why those teachers received free education when doctors and lawyers, with whom they insisted upon being bracketed,