PRIMARY EDUCATION.

Eligible to become is afforded by the reports to 1911 of the Minister of Education and officials of the Education Department of the anxiety of the authorities to keep South Australia abreast with the times regarding the instruction and training of teachers. Although gratifying, but satisfactory evidence is not forthcoming that the efforts made to attain this end are fully appreciated by parents or guardians. School charity is elaborate and costly. Parliament was never before so willing to spend money on its improvement; yet the national schools were barely so well attended as in 1910 (72,305) and, notwithstanding the large increase in the population, there was a disquieting decline in the number of pupils during the last two years. In 1913 the children under instruction numbered 76,889, of whom the average attendance was 46,829; total cost, £4,765; and cost for each child instructed, 2s. 7/4d. Last year 53,476, or very substantial proportion, were registered; the average attendance was 37,427; total cost, £84,033; and cost for each child, 2s. 3/9d. Census returns show that in 1915 the last year they were available with 1901, 7,669 more children under six years of age; but children of the "compulsory" period (between seven and 13 years) increased by 7,889 for a total of 46,829 in 1911, and 54,217 in 1901. According to the census returns there were 40,112 boys and girls received State school education last year, or about 7,579 obtained instruction in their homes. These figures vary considerably from the records of the Education Department, which lists as large numbers of children unaccounted for. They strengthen the case for an amendment of the law to provide for effective supervision and discipline in the schools, as it is evident that the pupils attend regularly and are properly educated.

In addition to the Government schools little difficulty is experienced in operating the "compulsory clauses" of the Act. For the whole year there were only 40 prosecutions for breaches of the section, whereas in 1911 and 1910, 33,114 children were sentenced for breaches of section 6. The number of prosecutions has diminished, and those committed to the workhouse are less. The children are required to attend regularly and are properly instructed.

In the Government schools the attendance is naturally limited by the compulsory clauses of the Act. For the whole year there were only 46 prosecutions for breaches of the section, whereas in 1911 and 1910, 33,114 children were sentenced for breaches of section 6. The number of prosecutions has diminished, and those committed to the workhouse are less. The children are required to attend regularly and are properly instructed.

It is much to be regretted that Government schools are not more popular with the people and that M.B.A. students and men and women who would benefit from higher education are not attending them. The Government should be a leader in this respect by example, and it is a pity that the Department, which is in a position to do so, is not doing all in its power to encourage attendance at these schools. The Government should encourage attendance at these schools, and not only in an abstract sense, but in practice, by providing facilities for attendance at the Government schools, and by making it known that these schools are open to all who wish to attend them.

Diploma of Education. An important step, which has been made by the Government, is the introduction of a diploma in education. To obtain the diploma, students must satisfy certain requirements, and must pass examinations in subjects of knowledge. They have, in addition, to submit to a special group of examinations and meet the requirements of the various types of scholarships awarded by the Government. The diploma is a great step forward in the education of teachers, and it is hoped that it will be followed by similar steps in the future.