

of his department but he has penned a few wholesome criticisms which must carry conviction to thoughtful observers. "The chief defect in our educational policy," he says, "is the fact that the school training tends almost entirely to the academic life. What is needed is a fair balance between manual or domestic training and intellectual development by the imparting of knowledge. The influence of the school should as readily prepare and foster in boys a liking for mechanical arts and industries, or for agricultural and pastoral pursuits, as for commercial, clerical, or literary callings. The defect mentioned has long been apparent, and it is highly desirable that the promised new Education Act shall provide for its removal. There are in the State, and especially in the metropolitan area, far too many youths of the unskilled labourer class, which, in periods of trade depression is usually in difficulties. The skilled training of the hands develops industry and resourcefulness, besides giving to people a sense of power and an unfailing means of pleasure. The State will be all the richer when an increasingly large proportion of its boys and girls are made to realize in practical ways how wonderful and invaluable is the human hand, as well as the brain which governs it.

The common complaint of excessive pressure upon teachers, with resulting nervous breakdown, is explained by the facts that the classes are often too large, that too much is attempted, and that women are given work which could more suitably be discharged by men. Regarding the curriculum Inspector Pavia records in a thoughtful report that a friend who sent a copy of that curriculum to a leading educational authority in Zurich received in reply this comment—"That is a wonderful curriculum; but how is it taught in the time allotted—six years?" A member of the recent Education Commission stated that the South Australian Department accomplished in six years what neighbouring States undertook in seven. It is incredible, however, that the children of this State are intellectually the superiors of others in the Commonwealth; and few people would conclude that our Department is right and the rest of the world wrong in such a matter. A too-hurried absorption of the course of study provided cannot produce the best results; it may lead to mental indigestion and nausea. Many children on leaving school are a disappointment, because of crude deficiencies in their knowledge of English and the rules of grammar.

spelling, and punctuation. Seemingly, the slower boys and girls do not get a fair chance with the curriculum. The foundation of the educational structure is not properly laid. Mr. Pavia advises that in future there shall be seven standards instead of six. The child would then receive more thorough grounding in all subjects, under more congenial conditions, and both teacher and pupil would benefit. A welcome and deeply interesting new feature is the second annual report of the Medical Inspector (Dr. Gertrude Halley). The facts detailed justify the provision of a medical staff adequate for the work of inspection in all schools. Parents will be glad to know that Dr. Halley is strongly opposed to the closing of schools as a general rule during outbreaks of infectious disease. She again forcibly draws attention to the wisdom of making special provision for the mentally defective children in the schools. This and other questions of concern to the rising race will probably be duly considered shortly by the Parliament.

*Register 9/15*

## A DEPARTMENT OF HISTORICAL RECORDS.

### IMPORTANT REPORT BY PROFESSOR HENDERSON.

One of the most valuable of the many reports which were laid on the table of the House of Assembly on Thursday was that compiled by Professor G. C. Henderson, of the Adelaide University. Its title, "The collection, storage, and preservation of archives in Europe," might not exactly capture the public imagination, but the subject, when analysed, really has an important interest. For some considerable time, as explained by Professor Henderson (who is Chairman of the Library Committee of the Board of Governors of the Public Library, Museum, and Art Gallery), efforts have been made in South Australia to collect all important original documents likely to be of service in the preparation of an historical review. "In this work," he says, "the members of the board have displayed a keen interest. A large number of these records have been obtained, including copies of the despatches that passed between the Governors of this Province and the Secretary of State in England. Many private citizens whose parents and relatives have been associated with important enterprises and branches of our local administration have handed over their papers, and already there are records enough in the Public Library to justify the existence of a historical department similar to that which in other countries is commonly called the Archives or Public Record Office. But before proceeding definitely to the foundation of such an institution, the board of governors thought it would be well to have a report concerning the most up-to-date and approved method of storing and preserving archives in Europe, and as it was my intention to visit Europe in 1914, the Government was requested to grant me an honorary commission to enquire into the collection, preservation, and classification of archives in Great Britain and the Continent."

—What Should be Done.—

Professor Henderson thinks it might be better to abandon the word "archives" in connection with our gradually increasing collection in South Australia, and to substitute for it "The Department of Historical Records." After dealing with the scope of the department, which would embrace diaries, chronicles, reports, gazettes, calendars, scientific papers, journals, pamphlets, and leading newspapers, Professor Henderson remarks that he was agreeably surprised to find in the Public Record Office at the time of his visit, the correspondence between the Colonial Office and the Australian colonies, as well as other self-governing parts of the Empire, as late as 1882. "Sir Frederick Kenyon stated, in answer to one of my enquiries," states Professor Henderson, "that he was of opinion that country newspapers in South Australia should be stored in Adelaide. The time

will come when many of these papers will be lost simply because they crumble away, and are not worth the cost of repairing, except in a few rare cases. That is already happening in the British Museum, and it will happen here before very long, because of the poor quality of the paper used. The loss in this way cannot be prevented. Only a few of the most valuable newspapers can justify the expense of repairs.

The very important question now arises—How are we to decide on the proper places for storing these official documents in a country such as the Commonwealth of Australia, where we have State and municipal, as well as Federal, Government? On this question my enquiries were as exhaustive as I could make them, and the almost unanimous expression of expert opinion was that Federal archives should be kept in some central place, preferably that which is the seat of the Federal Government; that State archives should be collected and preserved in the capital of each State, and the original documents belonging to municipalities or country towns may, under certain conditions, be kept in the localities to which they strictly belong. But the general trend of expert opinion favoured the collection of nearly all official documents of any part of a State in the capital of that State. . . . There are some folk who think that the whole system should be centralized, and that all the historical documents of the Commonwealth should be deposited in Melbourne. Expert opinion in the United Kingdom is decidedly against this; it favours decentralization, at least to the extent of preserving all State documents in the capital of such State. The reason for this is essentially the same as that which justifies each State in the right to manage its own education, and favours the establishment of a university in each State rather than centralizing all higher education exclusively in one Commonwealth university. To centralize all the universities of Australia exclusively in Melbourne would limit beyond all reason the opportunities of poorer students in distant States getting the benefits of higher education, and would give the people of Victoria, and especially of Melbourne, unfair advantages in the struggle for professional positions of the highest rank. In the State of South Australia, for example, Mr. Justice Murray founded the Tinline Scholarship for research into the history of South Australia. A scholar is appointed every year, and it is the duty of that scholar to prepare in two years a thesis on a subject set by the Professor of History, dealing with the history of the State. Some of these scholars are the sons and daughters of poor men, and though the annual value of the scholarship is £30 a year, it would be impossible for them to pay their board and find the time to go to Melbourne to do the work required for the preparation of these theses.

#### —Decentralization Urged.—

“It is safe to assume that the people of South Australia generally are more interested in the history of South Australia than are the people of any other State; and that, in consequence, they will be disposed to give more time to the study of its history than the people of any other State. It is also safe to say that if the archives of South Australia were removed to Melbourne, the successful working of the Tinline Scholarship would be impossible. The decentralization of archives is a matter of first-rate importance, and it is likely to be a question of debate in Australia in the near future. But it is, perhaps, unnecessary to urge the importance of decentralization further, because the people of South Australia are as keenly alive to the value of higher education as the people in the other States, and no Government is likely to hand over the advantages which their own people should possess to the students of another State, in which some misguided enthusiast may desire to centralize the archives of the States. There will always be some difficulties between the different States, and also between the States and the central archives, because of the overlapping of interests and the inequality of financial resources; but they would be minimised if some scheme of collection could be agreed upon by all the governing bodies of the different authorities in the Commonwealth. But should this decentralization be carried as far as the local country towns? It is necessary to remember that people in country towns rarely are inclined to estimate historical documents at their proper value, and are therefore unwilling, in the great majority of cases, to provide the funds necessary for their collection and preservation. Experience in other countries goes to show that from lack of interest important local documents are likely to be lost, even if they are not burnt as though they were so much waste paper. The commissioners now at work in

The commissioners now at work in England will, in all probability, recommend that country collections should be allowed to remain where they are, provided their preservation is safeguarded. Such preservation would involve the erection of a suitable building, and the appointment of a competent officer to attend to them and make them accessible to the public. If this rule were enforced in South Australia, how many country towns would decide to preserve their own documents instead of having them sent to Adelaide?"

—A Scheme for South Australia.—

A long and interesting description is given by Professor Henderson of the Antwerp State archives, because he regards them as the best model for South Australia. The building cost £9,365, the fittings an additional £2,790, and the furniture £630. "Desirable as such a building would be in South Australia," continues the report, "it is not to be expected that the Government of the State will sanction the expenditure necessary for such an up-to-date building at the present time, or even in the near future. Public opinion is not yet educated out here to a proper appreciation of the value of these important documents, and, besides this, we are participators in one of the most terrible and extensive wars ever waged in the history of mankind. It would be unreasonable, under such conditions, to ask the Government to expend upwards of £15,000 on a building and fittings, and to make provision for the annual upkeep of such an institution. For a separate institution of this kind, properly maintained, and made accessible to students, would require a staff of competent officers, including a keeper, an assistant, and a clerk, as well as a caretaker and general servant, and the officers in such an institution must be well trained in the handling of documents and vereed