

the view generally held was that it should consist of three teachers, chosen by the teachers, and three inspectors, with the Director or Chief Inspector as Chairman. On the other hand, some contended that the Chairman should be an outsider.

—The Children.—

In Melbourne there was a school for dealing with mental defectives. It was for the education of children who in mental capacity stood about midway between the children who are cared for by Minda and the average child in the public schools. The teachers thought that some such institution should be established in Adelaide, and further that some provision should also be made for educationally retarded children. He advocated physical training for scholars—(Hear, hear)—but regretted that military drill should have been officially connected with the schools. What was really needed was a good system of physical training and sufficient military drill to enable them to move their classes quickly, quietly, and effectively from place to place. The official military work should have been left till the boys left school, and they could then be taken in hand by the Military Department.

—Training of Teachers.—

Under the old system of training—four years of pupil teachership and one year at the Training College—it was claimed that too much attention was paid to the practical side of training. There was too much training in teaching and not enough training in learning. After several years of trial under the University system of training, it appeared that the pendulum had swung to the other extreme. Far too much time was spent in academic training and far too little in preparation for the life work of teaching. The selection of candidates for the teaching service was done in a somewhat perfunctory manner. Boys and girls from the high schools were asked to volunteer for the service. In many cases they received only a few weeks' actual teaching experience, and were then submitted for entry into the service. An inspector visited the school to judge their capability. The inspector who had that responsibility thrust upon him was entitled to sympathy. (Laughter.) The only rigid test of fitness that appeared to be insisted upon was the medical examination. Young people were submitted to a severe test, as if they were recruits for the front. (Laughter.) Under the present system a candidate spent from two to four years at the Adelaide High School as a student, and returned to his school at 18 or 19 more or less estranged from the conditions of his work, which much of his interest in teaching had been lost during the absence from it. When he returned as a junior teacher for a year he was quite a novice at his work. He then went to the University, where necessarily all his interest was in his studies, and the teaching portion of his student days was looked upon as drudgery. He emerged from his training, proud of his pass in a number of University subjects, but, sad to say, with comparatively little fitness for his practical work, without much enthusiasm except for study, and—in the case of a brilliant student—with a deep-seated desire to leave the department to pursue work that his University training had given him more interest in than in his teaching.

—Personal Classification.—

One of the important grievances of the profession was the requirements for personal classification. When a man had completed his course of training, and was duly qualified teacher, it seemed anomalous that he should from time to time be asked to pass in more subjects to secure personal classification. It was not the practice in any other profession. Once the diploma was granted it carried with it the privileges in law, medicine, and theology, and teaching alone was excepted. The advantages of University culture could not be applied to the major portion of the work done after training time. That work was usually crammed up from notes, no lectures were attended, and the cramming was for the pass only. Such work was of doubtful value to the teacher. Until recently the personal classification did not seem to have been taken so much into consideration. As far as academic training was concerned, it was urged that this should be taken into account during the training, and that after

a man had qualified for his certificate he should be judged on his actual practice as a teacher. A good suggestion was that the department or the University should issue a licentiate for primary teachers equal to senior, and two subjects of degree; and for high school teachers, who should graduate in the chief subject they desired to teach—mathematics or science. It was evident from the experience of the past few years that the training of teachers should be more in keeping with their work than at present. The six months course for provisional teachers and provisional assistants should be abolished. Many young people who were drafted into large schools had to take charge of classes requiring all the skill and energy of carefully trained teachers. The work became impossible, and the children under their care suffered all their lives. Many schools bore testimony to the truth of that statement. (Hear, hear.)

—Conditions in Queensland.—

Messrs. T. Fielding (President of the Queensland Teachers' Union) and W. F. Bevington (Vice-President) were welcomed to the conference. Mr. Fielding outlined the constitution and power of the Queensland Union, which, he said, conferred many advantages on local teachers. He also explained the work of itinerant teachers, who called on a family once in three months in the sparsely settled areas and left a budget of work for the children to accomplish before they made another visit. Mr. Bevington said one of the chief subjects which exercised the minds of education authorities in Queensland was the question of compulsory attendance. In the earlier stages it was only necessary to attend 60 days a half-year, but some parents counted up the days, and when the child's obligation had been fulfilled he was kept at home. Provision was then made for compulsory attendance on every school day, but a loophole was offered in the condition which allowed a child to be absent on the presentation of a valid excuse, and it was surprising to see the number of instances in which advantage was taken of that clause.

The conference was adjourned until this morning.

SUPERANNUATION FUND.

The annual meeting of subscribers to the Public School Teachers' Superannuation Fund was held at the Institute, North terrace, on Tuesday. The President (Mr. L. W. Stanton, I.S.O.) occupied the chair, and there was a large attendance.

In presenting the annual report the Chairman congratulated members upon the success which had attended the year's operations. The grand total of the fund was £144,008 (omitting interest accruing to June 30, £1,628) showing an increase since January 31, of £2,574. It was invested in the following proportions:—5½ per cent.

in rural and suburban properties; 4½ per cent. in retiring allowances, together with accrued interest in the hands of the Government; and 1 per cent. in cash at Treasury. The sum of £253 16/10 represented interest outstanding for the March quarter. The board had paid in annuities £4,000, and there were 80 annuitants. The present income from subscriptions was £7,700; and from interest £6,600. An analysis of the amount paid away since the inception of the fund started was as follows:—Annuities.—76 subscribers received, £34,279; 46 widows received £13,958; 1 family of orphans, £167. Subscriptions returned.—493 subscribers, £20,580. Funeral allowances.—To eight persons, £156; total, £69,140. Mr. Warren had resigned his seat on the board in March, owing to the appointment as inspector of schools, and Mr. Charlton had filled the vacancy. Mr. Buchanan retired from the board by effluxion of time at the end of March, and had been re-appointed by the Governor for a term of six years.

On the motion of Mr. R. T. Burnard the report was adopted, and a vote of thanks to the board for past year's efforts carried.

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RIVERTON, July 1.—Professor Henderson delivered his lecture on "The Great European War" in the town hall on Wednesday evening. Mr. J. Hassell occupied the chair. The attendance was large, and the proceeds, in aid of the stricken Belgians, must have been considerable.

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Professor William Henry Bragg, F.R.S., M.A., D.Sc., who was a professor at the Adelaide University from 1886 until 1908, when he took up his present post of Cavendish Professor of Physics at the University of Leeds, will complete his fifty-third year to-day. Professor Bragg was born at Wigton, Cumberland, and was educated at King William's College, Isle of Man, and Trinity College, Cambridge. At Cambridge he was a Foundation Scholar, and in 1884 he was third wrangler. He gained first class honors in part III. of the mathematical tripos in 1885, and in the same year he was appointed Eider Professor of Mathematics and Physics at the University of Adelaide. During his stay in Adelaide Professor Bragg was a member of the councils of the University and the School of Mines. He was also for some time on the board of governors of the Public Library, and was twice elected president of section A of the Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science. He has won world-wide fame by his research work in connection with radium.