

MR. CORBIN'S RECORD.

Mr. Corbin is a B.Sc. (London, Edinburgh, and Adelaide). He was appointed by the Vaughan Government to be Inspector in Forestry for a term of three years from September 8, 1911. His term was extended for one year, and he was given the title of Lecturer in Forestry, and in 1917 he was made Consulting Forester and Lecturer in Forestry. He was paid under the Forests Department until June 30, 1920, although most of his time was taken up by instructional work at the University and other places. When the public service classification was made he did not appear on it as an officer, but his salary was paid by the University out of a special grant made by the Government.

CORRESPONDENCE.

Sir—The Register has once more placed the people of this State under a substantial obligation by its straightforward and conspicuously fair and commonsense comments upon the extraordinary appointment of Conservator of Forests, which has caused so much astonishment and tended further to increase the general concern over recent Government appointments. It has been known for some time past that Mr. Corbin has been a subject of unjust misrepresentation, but nobody dreamt that this could be reflected in a decision to turn down a gentleman who is considered in forestry circles to be probably the most experienced, and certainly one of the most highly credentialed, scientific foresters in the Commonwealth. So great is his reputation that he is frequently consulted, as public documents show, by people desirous of undertaking forestry operations; and his opinions are quoted far and wide by authorities on silviculture. I am informed that he was offered a few months ago a position in another State, which would have been far more remunerative than that which has so unaccountably been given to a stranger to South Australia. He declined it, however, in consequence of a sort of understanding that he would have the reversion of the Conservatorship here, and an opportunity to carry to their conclusion certain experiments which have already made the forest of Kuitpo, which he controls, better known than any other forest in Australia. He could also complete the organization of the only forestry college in the Commonwealth, which he founded, and from which—as The Register has shown—highly paid and equally competent students have been graduated. In the light of recent events it seems as if the Ministry are badly affected by the old heresy that a prophet must not be honoured in his own country; but every one interested in forestry is convinced that the latest appointment of the Government is the least defensible, and hopes that the gentleman who has been chosen will decline to take up the duties of Conservator when he is made fully aware of the facts of the case. Meanwhile the attitude of The Register is warmly approved.—I am, Sir, &c.

FRIEND OF TREES.

Sir—The Register's article on this question says:—"It is unfortunate that the new appointment should have caused some misgivings." For my part, I feel a good deal of indignation that the head of the School of Forestry, who has shown practically how an enormous saving can and should be made in this branch of State business, should be passed over. No friend of Mr. Corbin can now object to his seizing the next offer made to him, and leave, as I have known so many capable men do, and go where they were appreciated. I have for years past advocated a proper business management for this industry, and have been cognizant of the blundering ignorance of the political heads, and feel deeply grieved that the present Cabinet is no wiser, after all the blundering of the past, and now is ready to lose the services of a proved and capable forester not tied down to the regular red tape methods. I am, Sir, &c., SAMUEL DIXON.

AUSTRALIA'S DEBT

Dr. H. Heaton will lecture to the University tutorial class tonight on Australia's National Debt. This class has spent the whole session studying Australian economic problems, and the devotion of a whole year to wrestling with the Commonwealth Year Book as a textbook has made the students well-informed on the questions arising from the settlement and development of our continent.

Dr. Heaton's opinions are:—No nation seems to be complete without a good large debt, but until 1914 Australia's burden was almost entirely different in character from that resting on the shoulders of other lands. Whereas the £800,000,000 on the debit side of the British ledger represented little but cannon and smoke, Australia's £300,000,000 represented to a large extent reproductive assets or expenses incurred in opening the country up for settlement.

Our railways alone had swallowed up £230,000,000 of loan money, and were paying about 4 per cent. on the capital outlay. The rest represented roads, water supply, and similar public services. Those who lamented the heavy indebtedness often failed to realize that the debt should really be regarded as the capital laid out by a big joint stock company in ventures which in other lands would be in private hands. Hence provided the loans were spent economically and wisely there was no cause for disquiet.

Since 1914, however, a big item had entered on the debit side of the national ledger. The war faced the Federal Government with the question:—"How shall we pay our way?" To meet the full cost of the war out of revenue was impossible, and on the whole Australia had done well in defraying over a quarter of the cost of the war services out of her consolidated revenue. This achievement ranked little below that of America or Great Britain.

In addition to spending over £130,000,000 out of revenue we borrowed £300,000,000 between 1914 and 1922. Of this sum about a third was borrowed in London, and the remainder in Australia. The raising of £240,000,000 in Australia was a great and unexpected achievement.

The net public debt of the continent today was nearly £900,000,000, which was more than the total pre-war debt of the United Kingdom. Every man, woman, and child had thus to shoulder over £160 each, of which about half was not reproductive. Hence the future for Australia depended upon (a) the provision of adequate sinking funds, (b) the avoidance of borrowing to meet ordinary revenue expenditure, (c) the careful decision as to the use of further loans, with a view to following each loan expenditure with a corresponding increase in production.

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ELDER CONSERVATORIUM

AN ORCHESTRAL CONCERT

The fifteenth concert in connection with the Elder Conservatorium this session was provided principally by the Conservatorium Student Orchestra. There was a large attendance, and the concert was in every way a success. Mr. W. H. Foote conducted, and the members showed quick responsiveness. Two movements from Haydn's Symphony No. 1 in E flat were particularly well played by all sections, the Minuetto with deep recognition of rhythm and the Finale with charm and spirit. The overture was from Mozart's "Don Giovanni," and the concluding selection was from Sullivan's "The Gondoliers." Emphatic expressions of pleasure were accorded Saint-Saens' "Dance of the Priestesses," from "Samson et Delila," which had to be played twice, and a similar compliment was paid to Walford Davies' "Solemn Melody" for strings and organ, in which Mr. Herbert Edwards earned special mention for capable management of the organ part. One representative from each of the vocal studios had been chosen to assist the orchestra. Miss Lorna Sidoli sang Percy Kahn's "Ave Maria," heard here last season with Madame Rosina Buckman as soloist, and the composer at the piano. The interpretation of Miss Sidoli was one entirely in the right mood. Miss Sylvia Thomas sang the aria from Charpentier's "Louise," "Depuis le Jour," and showed clearly that her voice covered that wide range which the wonderful composition demands. Mr. Harry Green presented the powerful "Sea Fever," by John Ireland, with intense clarity. Miss Linda Wald sang the Bach-Gounod "Ave Maria," with violin obbligato by Miss Clarice Gmeiner, and with Miss Norma Teisseire at the organ. This was a creditable performance in every way, especially the intelligent singing of the soprano. The accompanists were Miss Alice Meegan, Miss Muriel Prince, and Miss Kentish.

SELF-DEVELOPMENT AND SELF-CONTROL.

Speech by Dr. McKellar Stewart.

At the eighteenth annual meeting of the Kindergarten Union of South Australia, at orth Adelaide, on Monday, Dr. McKellar Stewart gave a valuable address on "Tendencies and problems of present-day education." He said that to those who were studying educational processes, nothing appealed more than such work as was done by the kindergarten union. Probably there had never been more general interest or more confusion concerning educational methods than at present. Everywhere, especially in connection with the older classes, authorities were attempting to beat out methods adequate to the needs of the time. But in the kindergarten, among the youngest children, that problem seemed to be solved, and little, if any, change was needed. The originators had worked upon the idea that a child was like a plant—needing only favourable environment and conditions, such care as a good gardener would give, in order to unfold and grow naturally. The idea was good so far as it went, but it must be admitted that the relation of plant and gardener, and child and teacher, were not absolutely identical. In the latter case, two minds, souls, spirits, were brought into contact, and must of necessity act and inter-act. The gardening analogy pressed too far had proved a hindrance even in Montessori methods. The main principal here was self-development. He preferred using that term, or "self-realization," to "self-expression," which, according to an American school of thought, had come to stand for the letting off of impulse and instinct with little effort at control. The aim of the training was to secure self-development and self-education, the child working within the interests natural to him. The absorbed attention of tiny children in Montessori work was an illustration of what was possible. Later there was a slowing down of the interest. "Many of us believe," added Dr. Stewart earnestly, "that in this generation we will see the principle of self-development carried right up through all the grades of education."

A Lifelong Process.

Education, the speaker continued, was practically a lifelong process. Babyhood was a most amazingly progressive time. In the first two or three years of life a child had to learn a language, take his part in the little commonwealth of home, and learn to exercise all his senses. The real home provided the ideal environment. And the kindergarten might be said to continue it. But childhood and the going to an ordinary average school (as they had been until recently) seemed to work a change for the worse. The child who had gone in keen, interested, alive, lost his spontaneous interest, and took a dislike to the work he had to do. A slowing down of the natural tendencies occurred; the little creature became constrained to realize not his own individuality but the conventions of the school. Secondary school influence was apt to continue in the same way. The boys and girls became young men and women and went out to some employment, and the educational process was still going on, for they had yet to realize powers not yet drawn out. There was, evidently, some kind of break between kindergarten, primary, and secondary schools, and so far there had been a fear of applying the same methods right through. But each stage should lead naturally to the next, each transition should be easy and natural. The problem of educationists to-day was to discover how to secure that. Long ago Plato had indicated the goal towards which that should tend by describing an ideal social order, possible only if each individual in the commonwealth was fulfilling his proper function, the aim of education being to fit them to do so. The same idea was put more simply and directly in the parable of the talents—a number of individuals with differing endowments, the man of one talent condemned not for possessing less, but for not using what he possessed. And to those who had done their utmost, came not a material reward, but greater responsibility, the joy of achievement—"Well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." The highest exercise—full, free, unfettered, unhindered—of the powers each individual possessed was the great ideal. And as they were used opportunities of further development were given.

Right Use of Leisure.

Self was not confined to the impulse and instincts which a child shared with the animals. While these should be given free play, there should break through the instinctive nature that self which sees the child out in pursuit of great ideas such as truth, beauty, and right. Training instincts alone could produce only intelligent animals. The great need was to go on to develop to the full the spiritual side. And such development must involve right relationships, bringing truth, beauty, and right into the social relationship which, owing to the democracy of the present, counted for more than ever before. If there ever had been a time when a man might live for himself it was so now. Merely to educate for social efficiency, to train for money earnings without equipping each individual to make some contribution to the society he belonged to, would be disastrous. Much of the trouble at the present time might be traced to the feverish anxiety on the part of most parents that a child should be fitted to make a living. What was wanted now more than ever before was education, not only for work but for the right use of leisure. Young men and women took up employment which gave them ample leisure out of working hours, and on the right use of that leisure everything depended. The danger point was the extreme desire to be thrilled—the saying, "I am going to live my own life"—in the distracted pursuit of enjoyment by flappers and raw young cubs just out of school. The question arose whether the trouble with the young men and women just beyond adolescence had its rise in the educational system under which they had grown up. They had not been trained to self-control, and when the control of school life was removed, did not know how to rule themselves or seek enjoyment in a sane way. The task of finding out how to fit young men and women to face life and use their freedom was a great one. Possibly the solution would be found in the principle of self-development carried on right through education from the outset.

The Most Important Factor.

The teacher was the most important factor in the whole fabric of education. There must have the right type of teachers. In order to secure this two or three things were necessary. First of all, they should be freed from all financial anxiety. It was not fair that those responsible for the earliest, most important developmental work should be subjected to this strain. They should demand persons of character, and train them thoroughly, especially in psychology. Knowledge of the child might come with experience, but people were not satisfied that the knowledge of the medical practitioner should come that way. They demanded a thorough course of study. Those into whose hands so great a charge as education was to be placed should have a thorough training, then, with the right sympathy, the understanding, and influence, they might effect very much for the future of the world. The kindergarten training college, concluded Dr. Stewart, stood for those ideals.

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CHOOSING A RHODES SCHOLAR.

THE SELECTION POSTPONED.

The South Australian Rhodes Scholarship selection committee met at Government House on Monday. His Excellency the Governor presided, and there were also present the Chief Justice (Sir George Murray), Professor Darnley Naylor, Messrs. J. R. Fowler, R. J. Rada, and H. Thompson, and the secretary (Mr. R. Hodge). Four applications were received for this year's scholarship, but the final selection was postponed until the next meeting of the committee, which is to be held on December 10.

Letters have just been received in Adelaide from John Bishop, who reached London on September 6. The young scholar was warmly welcomed on his arrival by English and Australian friends. The Royal College of Music was still in recess, but lessons were expected to resume on September 24. In his letters Mr. Bishop refers to a "long list" of friends in Adelaide to whom he had written during the voyage to Durban and posted on his arrival there on August 8. Probably these were acknowledgments of the very many presents and telegrams which he received on the day of departure from Adelaide. Unfortunately none of these letters—and also others known to have been posted—have reached their destination. Presumably they were a portion of the "small Australian mail" which left Durban on August 10 on the still missing steamer Baron Blantyre.

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