

TEACHERS IN CONFERENCE.

Co-ordinating Educational Methods.

The co-ordination of the activities of all religious and secular schools in the State is the aim of the Educational Society, which opened its second annual conference in Adelaide yesterday.

The Educational Society of South Australia, an association formed in June last largely at the instance of Dr. A. J. Schultz (principal of the Teachers' Training College) for the purpose of bringing about a uniformity of ideas and a co-ordination of effort of the educational activities of all the schools of the State, religious and secular, from the kindergarten to the University, held the inaugural session of its second annual conference at the Institute Building, North-terrace, on Thursday afternoon.

Professor McKellar Stewart, who presided over a large and representative attendance, said the value of personality was something to be considered as an end in itself. They were coming to regard education as a process which built up the internal resources of an individual, and if they succeeded in that respect efficiency and citizenship would look after themselves. That was the aim of a liberal education, which was the central topic of the conference.

The subjects dealt with on Thursday were:—"The place of art in education," by Mr. H. B. Van Raalte (director of the Art Gallery); "The place of music in education," by Mr. F. L. Gratton (supervisor of music, Education Department); and "The Humanities," by Professor Darnley Naylor. The conference will be continued to-morrow, Saturday, and Monday. To-morrow afternoon Professors Osborn and Keer Grant will deal with "The place of science in education," and at the evening session Professor Brailsford Robertson and Mr. A. C. Garnet with "The sex problem."

EDUCATION AND ART.

MODERN METHODS CONDEMNED.

Mr. H. B. Van Raalte trenchantly condemned the teaching of art as practised in the schools to-day. It was far too conventional, and what seemed to be aimed at, was a high technical craftsmanship, to the neglect of a correct artistic appreciation. The teachers should be trained to employ methods that encouraged the observation of differences. Ordinary persons really saw very little, and children should be taught to see and appreciate the beautiful things in nature. In his opinion education consisted in developing the faculty of right thinking. The chief channels through which education was achieved were the senses, and they must be properly developed in relation to the mentality that lay behind them. Art was more or less natural in children, and only needed developing in most cases. Art was based upon an observant and analytical recognition of nature. The study of art was excellent for training the memory, and for teaching logic and analysis. Since the opening minds of young children were the most sensitive, the best teachers should be employed to instruct them. If students were taught to think properly and to develop their senses, together with their powers of observation and analysis, they would probably become valuable citizens. The recognition of differences was essential to the understanding of art. If a child could describe an object he could usually draw it. Children should be taught to describe shapes, objects, and shadows, because if they could distinguish the differences, they had gone a very long way towards being able to reproduce them.

In reply to a question by Mr. G. L. Wood (St. Peter's College), whether training in art, which was largely a training in the observation of differences in connection with material things, would react in regard to differences in sound or touch which could not be expressed in bulk or mass, Mr. Van Raalte said he did not claim that the eye was the only organ which should be developed, as he considered all were important, and none should be neglected.

Dr. Schultz did not think Mr. Van Raalte's strictures in connection with the teaching of art in the State schools were altogether justified. If he were more in touch with what was being taught in some of the kindergarten classes round the city he would probably modify his opinion.

MUSIC IN THE SCHOOLS.

ITS PLACE IN EDUCATION.

Mr. F. L. Gratton said it was only during comparatively recent years that the value of the mental training afforded by the study of music had been recognised by educational authorities. For a long time music was regarded as the "Cinderella" of school subjects, one which could be disregarded or set aside at any

time without serious loss to the scholars. In most public schools a place had now been found for music in the curriculum, but the singing lessons were often abbreviated or even omitted for a while, and the time thus gained devoted to other subjects considered more essential from the examination point of view. This was an unwise policy, because children studying for examinations were mentally and physically refreshed by a good "sing-song," and were thus rendered more capable of dealing effectively with their more strenuous lessons. In spite of occasional setbacks, however, music was undoubtedly coming into its own as an essential factor in the education of children. It was now generally admitted that music was a form of intellectual and spiritual training which they could not afford to neglect, that was just as truly a language as French or Latin, and that it affords a mental training quite equal to that given by science or mathematics. Many people to-day, and young people in particular, seemed to have no idea how to spend their spare time except in some form of amusement, which was not always of an uplifting character. A practical interest in music would certainly help them to overcome this difficulty, and would also enable them to become much more useful members of society.

Of all school subjects music was probably the most popular with children. Most children were fond of singing, and loved to join with others in school songs and choruses. Their enjoyment of the singing lessons was greatly increased when they had been trained to use their voices properly, for they could then sing for fairly long periods without undue effort or weariness. This applied specially to boys, for as a rule there was little difficulty in getting girls to sing with a sweet and pleasant tone. Boys were more difficult to train at first, because they found it a greater effort to reach the higher notes of their songs. But a few lessons in voice production and the use of what was commonly known as the "head voice" in singing soon enabled them to overcome this difficulty, and their enjoyment of their singing lessons was then greatly enhanced. In many schools singing was used with good effect as a "break" between lessons. There might be time for only one brief song or round, but the enlivening effect on both teacher and children was most noticeable. The ensuing lesson was tackled with much more vigor and cheerfulness after this brief musical interlude. A striking proof of the recreative value of music was afforded by the community singing meetings in the Town Hall during the winter months. At these all "classes, creeds, and conditions" met on common ground to join in familiar songs. Community singing had undoubtedly come to stay, for it not only provided a source of popular enjoyment, but it developed the spirit of comradeship and the idea of mutual aid and service.

The musical work carried on in the State schools had necessarily to be confined chiefly to vocal music. The facilities for teaching instrumental music in public schools were very limited. No such difficulties occurred in connection with the teaching of vocal music. Most children had good voices, and could soon learn to sing in tune. It was as natural for a child to sing as it was to talk or play. The chief aims of the music curriculum in the public schools were to train the children to sing sweetly and in good tune; to develop their voices by daily exercises; to use singing as an aid to physical development, and as a means of brightening the school routine; and to inculcate a love for music, and the ability to understand and appreciate the work of the best musicians. The singing of the "Thousand Voice Choir" at the Exhibition concerts was probably the highest achievement of the musical work of the State schools. Much fine music had been heard at these concerts, which were generally regarded as being among the most important musical events of the year. The results achieved were a splendid testimony to the skill and patience of the teachers and the musical ability of the children. Eleven additional schools had recently been included in the concerts, so that 35 school choirs would take part this year. Three concerts were given each year, but in order to include as many as possible of the children who have practised the songs, the personnel of the choir differed considerably at each concert.

"THE HUMANITIES."

HOW TO LEARN LATIN AND GREEK.

Mr. N. M. G. Gratton (headmaster of Scotch College) presided at the evening session, which was devoted to a discussion of "The Humanities." This was introduced by Professor Darnley Naylor, who said the modern curriculum did not permit of learning Latin and Greek for the purpose of writing compositions in those languages, as there was not sufficient time to do that well, and it was not worth doing unless done well; but there was a way of learning those languages which was of inestimable value in education, namely translating Latin and Greek into English. The best translations extant of those languages lost a great deal of their charm and power when rendered into our language, and for one to be able to appreciate the works of the Classics adequately it is necessary to be able to read them in their original languages. The method he proposed would involve the abolition of the writing of Latin and Greek prose, and would consist only in reading those languages in the original. The present method was such that students had to spend many years in attempting to avoid vulgar errors in grammar and syntax, usually with poor results. There must be grammar and syntax learned, but it must be a minimum. He believed it would be a good thing if students were allowed the use of both a grammar and a dictionary in their examinations in Latin and Greek. (Applause.) The method of learning those languages he advocated was like being able to recognise a man compared with drawing his face in his absence. An accurate knowledge of Latin assisted in an accurate understanding of the Romance languages, and to know Greek was to be able to understand Russian more easily. To come into direct contact with the language and thought of other nations was to do much to abolish that vulgar outburst of feeling which often masqueraded under the name of patriotism. (Applause.)

Advertiser.

13 JUN 1924

ART AND MUSIC DISCUSSED

New Educational Endeavours.

Experts in Conference.

The range of subjects, and selection of speakers for the conference arranged by the Educational Society of South Australia will of a surety promote general knowledge of art, music, and science. The conference, which will last for four days, was opened on Thursday at the Institute Building on North terrace.

Professor McKellar Stewart, who occupied the chair at the inaugural session, said that there was a growing belief that personality should be made the central thought of education—something as an end in itself. It was thought that education was a process which built up the internal resources of the individual, which were of primary importance. If they got those resources built up, efficiency and citizenship would look after themselves. The Educational Society maintained the ideal of a liberal education as a central topic.

Art in the Education System.

Mr. H. B. Van Raalte, Director of the Adelaide Art Gallery, spoke on "The place of art in education." In dealing with the fundamental principles of the subject the speaker said it was difficult to educate a person without the aid of the senses. The senses must be developed according to the mentality behind them. Observation and analysis were two most important parts of right thinking. Art was almost a fundamental function of mankind, who had been educated largely through the senses. To teach along conventional lines was therefore not desirable. As far as art and drawing went, nothing was new. It was only a combination and analysis behind the mind. Drawing as taught in the schools to-day was not art. It was a trick of the pencil without handicraft behind it. In teaching the child it was not necessary to teach him to draw, yet he could be taught art. Teachers should employ methods that were created by observation. If they taught a child to see a difference they were beginning to teach it art. Art in the past had been stultified. It was the chief medium for educating the eye, excellent for the memory, and for logic and analysis. He had known many teachers who had become absolutely spoiled for true art because of that system. Teachers should have a proper course of training, and the best teachers

should teach the infants, because from a child's first teachable age he yielded to the influences of his masters. If children were taught to think properly then learning would come naturally. The idea of education should be to develop a human being who could help himself. One thing he considered remarkable was that those persons who were given the greatest function of the State, namely, that of educating its citizens, were among the poorest paid section of public servants.

Dr. A. J. Schultz (Principal of the Teachers' Training College) said that he thought that Mr. Van Raalte had taken a somewhat narrow view of art. There were colour, shape, and form included in an appreciation of art, and he would also include an appreciation of beauty in nature, as well as architecture. In the Kindergarten the taste and truth expressed in the objects and designs of the little ones was often delighted.

In reply Mr. Van Raalte said the study of art was not defined by drawing. He had purposely left out a definition of art, as it was at foundation a controversial subject. The infant had a greater tendency to draw than the adult. In reply to another enquiry the speaker said that the development of the faculty of art in an individual would help in the development of the faculty of science.

Place of Music in Education.

Mr. F. L. Gratton, Supervisor of Music in the Education Department, read a paper on "The place of music in education." In dealing with the educational aspect of the subject he said that during recent years the value of the mental training afforded by the study of music had been recognised by educational authorities. For a long time music was regarded as the "Cinderella" of school subjects. Even in those more enlightened days it was sometimes a difficult matter to secure adequate recognition for music, especially in secondary schools and the higher grades of primary schools. In most public schools a place had been found for music in the curriculum, but the singing lessons were often abbreviated, or even omitted altogether for a while. That was an unwise policy, for it was an undoubted fact that children studying for examinations were mentally and physically refreshed by a good "sing-song," and thus rendered more capable of dealing effectively with more strenuous lessons. It was generally admitted that music was a form of intellectual and spiritual training which they could not afford to neglect, that it was just as truly a language as French or Latin, and that it afforded a mental training quite equal to that given by science or mathematics. Music cultivated the rhythmic sense, awakened the ear, and deepened the imagination, trained the ear, and made children aurally observant. It broadened the outlook, called into play new instincts and emotions, developed new channels for self-expression and fostered love of the beautiful. Music might open to the youthful mind a glorious vista of all that was great and good in the world's literature. During the war the efficacy of music in developing a spirit of brotherhood among soldiers and civilians was manifest in a striking degree. At the last annual conference of the new South Wales Public Schools' Federation it was resolved that the Education Department should be asked to include music in future as a compulsory subject for the leaving certificate examination.

Music as Recreation.

In dealing with the recreative value of music, Mr. Gratton stated that in all school subjects music was probably the most popular with children. He had trained many school choirs, and had always found that the best results in solo and in choral work were achieved by boys, whose voices had been developed on proper lines. Girls could be trained to sing sweetly and with great expression, but boys of the same age could produce a fuller, richer, and more brilliant tone. Even when the children had little or no talent for music, they seemed to enjoy their singing lessons. In no school had he heard sweeter or more expressive singing than at the Point McLeay Mission School a few years ago. The musical work of that school was a remarkable instance of the refining and uplifting influence of good music upon children who had few natural advantages. In many schools singing was used with good effect as a break between lessons. A striking proof of the recreative value of music was afforded by the community singing meetings in the Adelaide Town Hall. Community singing had come to stay, for it not only provided a source of enjoyment, but also developed a spirit of comradeship and a helpful idea of mutual aid and service.

Musical Work in Public Schools.

The facilities for teaching instrumental music in public schools were very limited. In the leading schools in England and in America, and also in some parts of Australia, class instruction in the violin and other orchestral instruments had been given with a fair amount of success. The cost of the instruments, the necessity for engaging professional musicians to give the lessons, and the difficulty of carrying on the work without interfering with the ordinary school routine would always be serious hindrances to the development of music in schools. Most children had good voices. It was as natural for a child to sing as it was for him to talk or play. The teaching of vocal music could, therefore, begin in the infant and kindergarten