

QUALIFYING EXHIBITIONS.

From "BOLEY":—Each year the Education Department, in its wisdom, allots a number of exhibitions among the candidates for the qualifying certificate examination. For this purpose the scholars are grouped into four divisions, and a number of exhibitions allotted to each group. The exhibitions, valued at £20 per annum, with a like amount for board where necessary, are tenable at secondary schools approved by the department, and their apparent object is to aid in the secondary education of the State's most promising children. A casual glance at the awards for the past few years will occasion grave doubt as to the efficacy of the means of selection. This year four exhibitions went to one school. Last year the same school (whose average attendance is about 50) obtained five, one being awarded in a division outside its own, the department being evidently unable to unearth enough bright children in that particular division. Speaking from memory, the same school was awarded three exhibitions in the previous year. One hesitates to detract from the merit of this record, but is faced with the fact that either the children of the locality are endowed with extraordinary ability, or are blessed with a teacher far and away above the ordinary run. To presume the former is a strain on one's credulity, and to accept the latter is to belittle the work being done by teachers all over the State. Up to 1920, these exhibitions were awarded on a special examination, and undoubtedly did reach children of real merit. One calls to mind two boys awarded exhibitions in that year who are now doing fine courses at the University, one in medicine and the other in engineering. On the other hand, one recalls the case of a boy who, under the present system, obtained 610 marks in the Q.C. examination, at the age of 10 years, without gaining an exhibition; but who two years later led the State brilliantly in the intermediate examination with seven honours in eight subjects. It seems time to call a halt in the present method. Either let the University authorities take charge of the awards by means of a special examination, or give teachers, who, after all, are the best judges of the real ability of their pupils, a chance to recommend the best of these for the exhibitions. One realizes that here, too, there would be difficulties, but at any rate it should not be difficult to improve on the present method, which, not to put to fine a point upon it, is a direct incentive to the old-fashioned process known as "stuffing."

CUTTINGS

SUNDRY

A VALUABLE LAW BOOK.

South Australian Digest, 1884-1926. By W. A. Norman, LL.B. Melbourne: The Law Book Company of Australasia.—This is a digest of law cases reported in the regular series of South Australian law reports between the years 1884 and 1926, and also of numerous cases not reported in the regular series for the years 1893-1898, but extracted from the newspaper reports for these years. Its publication should be welcomed by every practising member of the profession in South Australia, and it will also no doubt be of considerable value to many lawyers in other parts of Australia, and to agents, trustee companies, and others whose work touches the law. Mr. Norman is a member of the South Australian bar, and his name is a guarantee of careful and conscientious work, and no one is better equipped with the requisite technical knowledge for such a compilation. A work of this character is in the nature of a trade tool depending for its value and usefulness not at all upon literary merit but upon accuracy and intelligent and scientific arrangement. The last publication of the sort was Mr. Lovekin's Digest of Cases published in 1884, and obviously such a work has been long overdue. Mr. Norman is to be congratulated on the result of his labors, which must have been no light task. He is, we think, particularly to be commended for his courage in attempting to bridge, if, as he himself hopes, only temporarily, the gap in the regular series of reports from 1893 to 1898. This regrettable hiatus is an old story traditionally attributed to the pique of a prominent lawyer and politician, now deceased, at the result of a famous decision on the Crown Lands Acts of the day, a result due in a large measure to the cogency and lucidity of the argument of one who is now a distinguished member of the Bench. Law reporting, as every practitioner knows, has become more and more developed and systematised, involving not only larger demands on the lawyer's purse to keep himself up to date, but increased labor in searching for precedents. Such a work as Mr. Norman's will tend to lighten not only the expense but also the labor, and should soon be regarded as indispensable to the busy practitioner. We shall be surprised if it does not stand the test of everyday use. A list is given of South Australian cases reported on appeal to the High Court and the Privy Council. The book is well printed, well arranged, and in a handy form, and the publishers' enterprise in bringing out such a work merits every encouragement.