

MUSIC EXAMINATIONS.

REMARKS BY PROFESSOR ENNIS.

Dr. Ennis, professor of music at the University of Adelaide, and Mr. Hodge, the registrar of that institution, held a conference in the Builders and Contractors' Hall, Surrey-chambers, with the music teachers of Perth and district on Saturday afternoon. There were from 30 to 40 persons present.

Professor Ennis explained at length the whole of the details and advantages of the new scheme of public examinations in the theory and practice of music to be held in 1907 by the Associated Universities of Adelaide and Melbourne. He pointed out that the special advantage of all would be that in the two highest grades two examiners would be employed. It was also intended, he said, to offer exhibitions, if possible, on the results of the examinations, such exhibitions to be tenable at the Elder Conservatorium of Music in Adelaide. This point, however, has not yet been definitely decided. The professor also clearly demonstrated the advantages of an Australasian scheme of examinations, to be held by the Associated Universities of the Commonwealth and New Zealand—a step that will probably eventuate as a result of the co-operation between Melbourne and Adelaide. He further advocated the policy of keeping the fees in the several States for the benefit of musical education in each.

Mr. Hodge also addressed the meeting and gave a short history of the Chair of Music of the University of Adelaide. The establishment of that Chair, he said, was due to the efforts of Sir William Robinson, when he was Governor of the State. There was at that time no Chair of Music in connection with the university, but Sir William was instrumental in getting a number of prominent citizens to subscribe a certain amount annually for five years, and the total so raised was sufficient to provide for a professor of music. The "Mus. Bac." course was at once entered upon. Before the five years had expired a system of public examinations in the theory and practice of music was instituted. These examinations at once became popular, with the result that when the time expired for which private subscriptions had been promised the Chair was self-supporting. It is now, however, endowed by a bequest of £20,000 from the late Sir Thomas Elder, and this has enabled the council of the university to establish the Elder Conservatorium of Music.

The history of the Chair in Adelaide, continued Mr. Hodge, should be a distinct encouragement to lovers of music in this State, and if the public examination scheme is only patriotically supported, when Perth comes to establish a university of its own this will be a valuable asset for it, inasmuch as the whole of the fees would become the property of such university.

A short discussion followed, those present seeming heartily to approve of the propositions placed before them, and a number of them conferred with Professor Ennis and Mr. Hodge at the conclusion of the meeting.

On the motion of Mr. D'Arcy Irvine a vote of thanks to the gentlemen from Adelaide was carried with enthusiasm.

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THE NEW SCHEME OUTLINED.

AN AUSTRALIAN STANDARD DESIRED.

Dr. J. M. Ennis, Elder Professor of Music at the Adelaide University, explained to a gathering of music-teachers in the Builders and Contractors' Hall, Forrest Chambers, on Saturday afternoon, the new scheme for conducting examinations in music in this State, as recently decided upon by the Melbourne and Adelaide Universities.

Dr. Ennis said he had found, since coming to Perth, that a certain misapprehension existed with regard to the music examinations in the past. The first thing he wished them to be certain of was as to what the examinations were that had just been held. They were the University of Adelaide examinations, but he had heard them spoken of as the Associated Board Examinations. As a matter of fact they were only held in conjunction with the Associated Board after a certain period, and were University examinations all the time.

All that took place was a change in the method of conducting them. Now there was another change imminent. Their agreement with the Associated Board expired this year by effluxion of time, and the Universities of Adelaide and Melbourne had considered how they could best conduct the examinations in the future. Their idea was to introduce some uniform system for Australasia, and have one standard, the examinations to be under the control of the Adelaide and Melbourne Universities, which were the only Universities endowed with Chairs of Music. A proposal was accordingly submitted to the General Conference of Universities in April last, and the following resolution passed:—"That co-operation between the Universities of the Commonwealth and New Zealand in the conduct of public examinations in music is desirable, such co-operation to be on the general lines of the proposed agreement between the Universities of Melbourne and Adelaide, adopted at the conference held in Melbourne on April 23."

There was nothing now to be done but to get out the syllabus for next year. He had come to Perth to elicit their support to the scheme, and they might ask him was there any reason why they should do so? His answer was "Yes." While in reality the examinations would be a continuation of what had already been done by Adelaide, there would be certain advantages thrown open to the public of Australia which had not existed heretofore. They were educationists, and would try to do more for the public and the teachers than had been done by any visiting bodies. They would start with five grades, and in the highest two grades there would always be two examiners sent over to Western Australia for every candidate, both in theory and practice. For the lower grades there would be only one examiner. He was sure they would realise that it would be to the benefit of the candidates to have two examiners instead of one, as in the past. The fees would be slightly lower in most grades than they had been—those for theory distinctly so. But the fees for practice examinations in the highest grade would remain as at present. In the highest grade they would insist upon theory examination, for which there would be no extra charge. Another advantage would be offered at once, but not in its complete form. The visiting bodies had sent out one examiner to every district, and he had had to examine in all sorts of subjects. Now, it was a fact that a musician of knowledge and experience could form a good idea of the capabilities of candidates in subjects outside of his own, but it would be far better if candidates in any subjects could be examined by experts in these subjects. They could not accomplish that completely just now, but they would send two examiners over to Western Australia and try to embrace at least two subjects, if not four. He had been asked what would be the value of the certificates issued. Seeing that they would be issued in the name of the associated Universities of Adelaide and Melbourne, their value could not be discounted. Then, he had been questioned as to how the value of the certificate would compare with that of the visiting body. It ought to be valued higher here in Australia. It would be a test of the musical education of the candidate. But, so far as the public examinations were concerned, they were pupils' certificates, conferring no letter after the names of the successful candidates in the highest grade, and not vouching for their teaching capabilities. So, to compare the values was quite irrelevant. They were not going to buy support by issuing cheap certificates. The standard would be a high one, and very much like that existing in connection with the Melbourne examinations. He knew of cases where a candidate had got up to a certain grade of examination and passed. Immediately the result had become known, the unfortunate student got four or six pieces for the next grade, and stuck to these for

the whole year. That was not education at all. The examinations should be taken more or less incidentally, and cramming was a thing they wished to discourage. He would therefore ask the teachers to consider the advisability of sending candidates up for a suitable grade. The advantage to Western Australia in supporting these examinations, which were the nucleus of an Australian, or perhaps an Australasian, scheme, was that when the Perth University came to be established it would come in as a partner, and all the money paid in fees, less the expenses, would be retained in the State. They intended to offer exhibitions in connection with the examinations, tenable at the Elder Conservatorium of Music, Adelaide, but they would not entirely commit themselves to this until they had had some expressions of opinion from those interested. The examinations would start about September of next year, or a little later, and the syllabus, for which there would be no charge, would be ready about the end of October next.

Mr. C. R. Hodge, registrar of the Adelaide University, said the exhibitions at the Elder Conservatorium would provide for two or three years' tuition free, and would be the blue ribbon of the year for the teacher who trained the successful scholar. He thought the scheme would prove a lasting benefit to Western Australia.

In acknowledging a vote of thanks proposed by Mr. D'Arcy Irvine, Dr. Ennis said he looked forward to visiting Perth next year as an examiner, when he would deliver at least one lecture on music. (Applause.)

Register Sept. 4th, 1906.

Professor Ennis, of the Adelaide University, and Mr. C. R. Hodge (registrar) returned from a trip to Western Australia by the Ortona on Monday. Dr. Ennis went to the west to explain the details and advantages of the new scheme of musical examinations which will be conducted by the associated Universities of Melbourne and Adelaide next year. Mr. Hodge devoted himself to work connected with the University centre formed at Perth eight years ago. This centre, controlled by a local committee, has made a rapid advance, so much so that the secretary and assistant secretary (Messrs Cooke and Jocelyne respectively), who are engaged at the Perth Observatory, have been reluctantly obliged to relinquish the work, and a new secretary is to be appointed. Last month, at the Perth centre, over 700 candidates were examined in the primary and musical examinations. A general meeting of the central committee was held in Perth during the visit of Professor Ennis and Mr. Hodge, and was followed by a conference. Subsequently a largely attended meeting of teachers of music was held. The following week a meeting of teachers took place at Kalgoorlie, at which Dr. Ennis explained the new scheme of examinations in detail, and a local committee was formed to control the work. This will be a subcommittee of the Perth central committee. Dr. Ennis and Mr. Hodge are extremely gratified at the result of their mission.

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UNIVERSITY LOCAL CENTRE

All Heads of Schools, Music Teachers, and persons interested in University work, are invited to meet PROFESSOR ENNIS and Mr. C. R. HODGE, of the Adelaide University, at the Council Chambers, Kalgoorlie, on TUESDAY AFTERNOON, 28th August, at 2 o'clock, for the purpose of forming a Committee to Control a Local Centre of the University.

J. WATSON BROWN, Local Secretary.

EXAMINATIONS IN MUSIC.

The University council to-day provisionally agreed to a report of the Conservatorium committee dealing with arrangements with the Adelaide University for co-operation in the conduct of music examinations. It was explained that the object of the universities is to do away with outside examinations.