

men who attend the 22,000 schools controlled by the various local education authorities. The Education Department in South Australia employs one medical inspector, two nurses, and one dentist, to attend to 90,000 children attending about 2,000 schools. The reports of our medical inspector show that she is able to examine about 4,000 children per annum. Her duties include enquiry into the hygienic conditions of the school premises, with special attention to ventilation, lighting, drainage, and accommodation; examination of pupils, with special attention to ventilation, lighting, drainage, and accommodation; examination of pupils, with special reference to defects in eyesight and hearing and to post-nasal growths; examination of female candidates seeking admission to the teachers' college. Parents are advised when medical attention is necessary.

The Training of Teachers.

"In every country visited by me the importance of giving the teacher a sound academic and a sufficient professional training is fully recognised. The standard of admission to the college, the character of the training, and the length of the course are essentially the same in all cases excepting in Ontario, where the length of the professional course in the normal schools is one year only. Most of the colleges are residential, or provide extensive hostel accommodation controlled by the local education authorities, and thus the students get the immeasurable benefits resulting from college life. An excellent example of the provision of hostels was seen at Aberystwyth, where there are two large hostels for women students connected with the University Training College, and accommodating 280 women. In South Australia we have a course of instruction which is more or less rigid. It prescribes the work in each subject that should be covered by a child during each year of his school life, and is so designed to assist the weak teacher, and to prevent loose or discursive work. But it leaves to the teacher's own discretion the distribution of the year's work in each subject, the methods he will use, and the examination and promotion of his pupils. It is, however, sometimes claimed that this plan restricts the freedom of a good teacher, and the range of his teaching in individual subjects. But it should be borne in mind that it was framed having due regard to the large number of untrained teachers employed by the department, as well as to that class of plodding, earnest, but second-rate teachers who require help and guidance. After seeing schemes in operation, which claim to give scope to the teachers' individuality and inventiveness, and having due regard to the difference in Australian conditions, especially to the fact that the teacher is promoted as the result of the inspector's estimate of the value of his work, it seems to be still necessary for the department to publish a syllabus of work sufficiently explicit in detail to guide the untrained or the weak teacher. Nevertheless, arrangements could and will be made to allow greater freedom of choice to our more expert teachers. The English "code," which is accompanied by an elaborate pamphlet containing suggestions to teachers, lays down the broad outline of the curriculum, and embraces the same subjects as are taught in South Australian schools. It is claimed that it gives more attention to the cultural than to the formal side of instruction, and that it allows of opportunity to increase the amount of individual and independent effort on the part of the pupil, and consequently to diminish oral class teaching. It certainly increases the efficiency of the work by encouraging specialization in teaching. The aims and scope of the work in the various subjects are very similar to our own, but the pupils appear to read many more books than do our children—the number of supplementary readers used in most schools varies from 6 to 12 per annum per class.

Bible Reading in Schools.

In Great Britain, Bible reading in schools is not made compulsory by the Education Act, but the various local education authorities (formerly called school boards) prescribe it. In most countries and local education area it is the only subject in the code for which a definite syllabus is drawn up for the guidance of the teacher. Every morning school begins with a prayer (prescribed, and including the Lord's Prayer) and a suitable morning hymn, and the work of each day closes with prayer (prescribed) and a suitable evening hymn. Religious instruction is given by the teacher after the opening exercises for 30 minutes every morning (the school hours are half an hour longer than in South Australia), but no teacher is required to give such instruction if he informs the authority in writing through the head teacher that he has a conscientious objection to so doing. (I did not meet with any conscientious objector). The lessons are made practical and interesting. The prayers and hymns are regarded as sacred exercises, and the lessons are conducted with reverence. During the half-hour lesson referred to above, it is the usual practice for the Bible to be read aloud by the teacher and by the pupils. The reading is accompanied by such explanation and instruction as may be required, having due regard to the age and capacity of the class. Passages for repetition are prescribed. In the non-provided schools (the church or denominational schools), the vicar takes an active part in the exercises indicated in the previous para-

graph, and, in addition, he gives dogmatic instruction and teaches the tenets of his own particular sect. But in the ordinary elementary schools, the work is free from dogma, and is carried out by the ordinary teaching staff of the school. In all the schools that I visited, this work was admirably done; it was a real part of the school life, both the teachers and the children appeared to look upon it as a very important part of the day's proceedings, and I must record that the spirit of reverence that pervaded the exercises, and the wide knowledge of Scripture history on the part of the children, made a great impression upon me.

In Denmark and Sweden.

The preceding description applies with little alteration to the schools of Denmark and Sweden. In both of these countries I found that the teachers treated the subject seriously, and that the children showed the same spirit of reverence and wide knowledge of Scripture history as the English children. In Ontario either the Bible or the selected Scripture readings of the International Sunday School Association, or the Scripture readings adopted by the Department of Education, are used as prescribed by the regulations of the Department of Education. No pupil is required to take part in any religious exercises objected to by his parents or guardians, and in order to enforce this regulation, the teacher, before commencing a religious exercise, is instructed to allow a short interval to lapse, during which the children or wards of those, if any, who have signified their objection, may retire. In six of the United States of America (Alabama, Georgia, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Tennessee), the daily reading of the Bible is required by law. In most of these States the law provides that the reading shall be without comment. The amount to be read varies:—Georgia requires one chapter per day, Pennsylvania and Tennessee 10 verses, New Jersey five verses, and the others do not specify. All of these States provide for the exclusion of pupils whose parents send a written request that their children may be excused from attending the lessons. It is interesting to note that the recent precedent created by the Courts of California in deciding that the Bible is a sectarian book, and that it must therefore not be employed in schools is being followed in some other States.

Recommendations and Suggestions.

"In making the following recommendations and suggestions," adds Mr. McCoy, "it is to be observed that if new activities are to be successfully undertaken, it will in some cases be necessary to appoint special officers to organize the projects, to advise the teachers, and to inspect the work in the schools.

1. Consolidation of Schools.—It is suggested that a suitable district be selected and the majority of parents being willing, that a fully equipped consolidated or central school be established in lieu of four or five existing small schools; that suitable provision be made therein for the teaching of elementary agriculture, woodwork, and domestic science, and, if warranted, for a four year high school course.

2. The Teaching of Elementary Agriculture, Woodwork, and Domestic Science in Rural Schools.—It is recommended that more adequate provision be made for teaching elementary agriculture, woodwork, and domestic science in rural schools and to this end:—

(a) That a system of bonuses be inaugurated to encourage the teaching of these subjects, such bonuses to be paid on the certificate of the special officer to those teachers, who, having obtained the prescribed qualification, have done satisfactory work in their schools.

(b) That an allowance for the purchase of seeds, manures, waterfencing, &c., be paid on the £ for £ principle and on the recommendation of the special officer to schools with a qualified teacher.

(c) That a special officer be appointed, in the first case, for a period of three years, to organize, supervise, and encourage the teaching of these subjects in rural schools, and to organize and foster boys' and girls' agricultural clubs on the lines indicated in section D. 6. (Such an officer would be expected to co-operate with local agricultural societies and to use all reasonable means to stimulate public interest in the work of the schools and the clubs.

3. The Teaching of Agriculture in Secondary Schools.—In regard to the department's land at Urrbrae, most of which was generously donated by the late Mr. Peter Waite for the purpose of agricultural teaching, it is suggested that, when the finances permit, a boarding school embracing the main features of the Blackford school and the Hurlstone Agricultural High School (New South Wales) be erected. Such a school should be organized to afford:—

(a) A broad general education for boys and girls up to the age of 16 years.

(b) A course of study suitable as a preparation for entrance to the Roseworthy Agricultural College at the age of 16 years.

(c) Instruction suitable for boys about to enter upon work on the land, but whose parents cannot afford to keep them at school beyond the age of 15-16 years. The institution, besides affording city children such experience of country life as might determine them to settle on the land, would also form an admirable training ground for the students of the Teachers' College. Schools of instruction in various forms of agriculture could also be conducted here for the benefit of teachers engaged in rural schools.

4. Adolescent Education.—It is recommended that:—

(a) Provision be made for the establishment of supplementary classes in primary schools for the benefit of children who have completed the course and whose parents intend that they shall leave school at the age of 14-15 years.

(b) Central schools with a technical, commercial, or domestic bias be established to afford special instruction to those who promise to take up industrial, commercial, or domestic pursuits at the age of 15-16 years.

(c) Evening continuation classes be formed in connection with the classes and schools recommended above.

(d) A secondary correspondence school be established to give further instruction to children who have satisfactorily completed the primary course, but who by reason of distance and expense are unable to attend a high school. Such children would continue their attendance at the primary school, and would pursue their studies under the supervision of the teacher, but the advanced work would be set and corrected by the staff of the secondary correspondence school, with headquarters in Adelaide. This school might also render advice and assistance to those uncertified teachers who desired guidance in connection with their studies for public examinations.

5. School Buildings.—With a view to evolving types of plans that will suit the varying conditions of different districts in South Australia and at the same time will comply with the demands of the educationist, the medical officer, and the architect, it is suggested that representatives from the Works and Education Departments meet to consider the plans and

literature presented to the Government. The officers would deal with such questions as the provision of light, heat, air, accommodation, furniture, &c., and would give special consideration to the plan of open-air schools. It is recommended that in planning new schools:—

(a) Adequate arrangements be made for the convenience and comfort of teachers, and that in all schools with more than two teachers properly furnished offices and retiring rooms be provided.

(b) An assembly hall be provided for all schools of more than 400 pupils.

(c) Suitable provision be made for the teaching of woodwork and domestic science in rural buildings where such work could be effectively carried out by the staff.

It is further recommended that the above-mentioned conveniences be installed in existing schools as the finances and opportunity permit.

6. Physical Education.—It is recommended that an expert officer be appointed as Supervisor of Physical Culture. Such an officer should visit the schools in order to assist the teachers by advice and demonstration, train the students of the Teachers' College, and conduct schools of instruction for the benefit of teachers. A woman assistant should also be appointed to supervise the work of the girls in the largest schools and to assist in the instruction and training of women students and teachers.

(Since writing this report, the Commonwealth Government has intimated its intention of re-appointing an officer to supervise the physical training of boys of 12 years of age and upwards. Such an appointment should obviate the need for carrying out the first part of this recommendation.)

7. Medical Inspection.—It is recommended that the activities of the medical branch be extended to permit of each child being examined at least twice during his school career. If this be approved, it will be necessary to appoint additional doctors, dentists, and nurses.

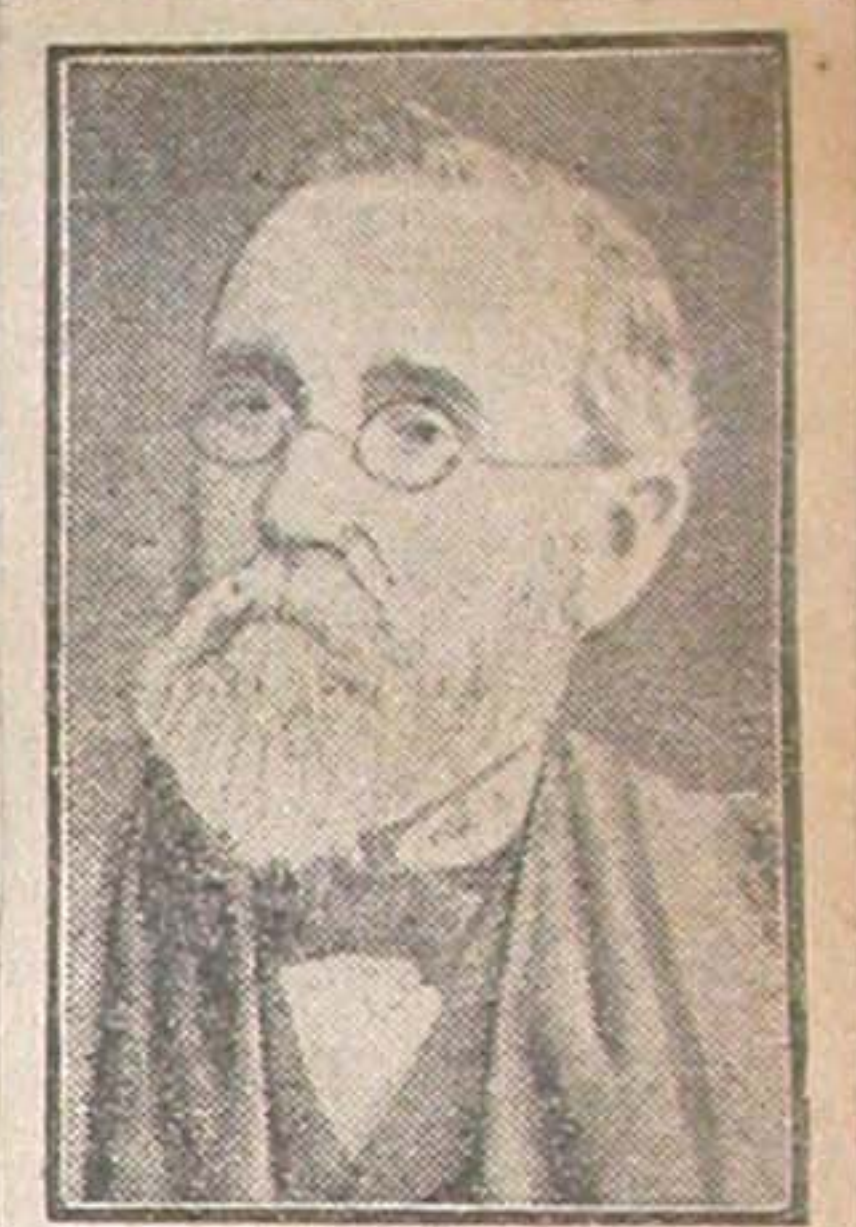
8. Backward and Mentally Defective Children.—A preliminary survey of the children in our largest schools should be made to ascertain the extent to which provision ought to be made for the education of the backward and the mentally defective. When this is ascertained, an officer with special qualifications in psychology should be appointed to organize and supervise the work.

9. The Training of Teachers.—In connection with the recommendations regarding the teaching of elementary agriculture, &c., in rural schools, arrangements will be made to schedule these subjects as definite electives in the college courses.

It is recommended that a suitable piece of land be obtained for a college garden to enable practical instruction to be given to the students. It is suggested that the authorities controlling the Botanical Gardens be approached to see if they are willing to grant the loan of a suitable plot for this purpose. More extensive provision will need to be made for holiday courses in these subjects so that students and teachers will be enabled to gain the qualifications referred to under recommendation 2.

10. Court of Instruction.—The course of instruction will be reviewed with the object of affording more freedom to teachers in planning their work. In this connection our methods of inspecting schools and of examining pupils for the qualifying certificate will receive consideration, and such modifications as are found to be expedient and practicable will be made.

Professor Walter C. Howchin, F.G.S. who for 23 years has been editor of the reports of the proceedings generally of the South Australian branch of the Royal Society for the Advancement of Science, was presented by the President (Dr. R. Palleine), at a meeting of the society in Adelaide on Thursday evening, with a substantial cheque as a testimonial to the value of his services. Dr. Palleine referred to the enormous amount of work which had been done by Professor Howchin in preparing reports of the activities of the society. They were, he said, a credit to him and all concerned. He read a letter from Sir Joseph Verco, stating that he regretted he was unable, through illness, to be present to do honour to one so worthy of it, and he expressed the hope that Mr. Howchin would live long to continue his valuable assistance. Professor Rennie and Dr. R. S. Rogers also spoke. Professor Howchin, in acknowledging the generous gift, said he could hardly recognize that his services had been so valuable as to call for such recognition. He had always had the interests of the society at heart, and he sincerely thanked the members for their gratitude to him. The professor, who is about 80 years of age, joined the society in 1883, and Professor Rennie was enrolled in 1885.



PROFESSOR HOWCHIN.

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EDUCATION NOTES.

By Unlocks.

Inter alia

W.E.A.

The Workers' Educational Association is growing apace. It was formed about 20 years ago, and its usefulness is so pronounced that it is growing in popularity year by year. Branches have been formed all over the Empire, and the movement has supporters in other than English-speaking countries. What the ideal democracy wants, among other things, is citizens with independence of mind. An attempt to deal with civics is made in our public schools, but no child can view the matter from the same point of view as an adult, whose experience gives him a different standing. But teachers may do much to cultivate independence of thought, and when young students come to face the problems later on they will have the courage to do their own thinking instead of showing what is called the "servile mind." That true democracy needs a good education for every citizen has long been the belief of leaders of thought, and the fruit of this belief is the Workers' Educational Association. It was called an alliance of labour and learning, and the membership steadily increased, and now numbers hundreds of thousands. Eager sets of students deal with important subjects, such as ethics, economics, literature, and public speaking. Educated people of both sexes support the movement, and are members of various councils of management. No one doubts the value of this growing institution, and all who see in it a real aid to a more tolerant and thoughtful citizenship will lend it encouragement.