

SCHOOL EXAMINATIONS

RENNE MEMORIAL MEDAL AWARDED

RECORDS TO BE PUBLISHED

In the periodical discussion of the value of examinations in education, and the necessity for them, the advocates of restriction or abolition would seem now to be having it all their own way. The theory is that the only adequate test of the degree of knowledge attained by the student is examination; and it is indeed obvious that, in order to find out what he does know, and also what he does not know, it is necessary to ask him. But, as pointed out by Miss Macdonald, head-mistress of the Presbyterian Girls' College, who is answerable for the present discussion, the pressure of the "dead hand of examination" may actually prevent good work. Miss Macdonald will have been gratified to see that she has the Director of Education largely with her. Mr. Adey believes that a few years hence will witness drastic alterations in the mode of conducting examinations in the public schools; and as he is in the enviable position of being able to play some part in the fulfilment of this prophecy, what he says "cruise some le," as the Americans phrase it. His criticism is mainly applicable to "external" examinations—those conducted outside the schools by persons unconnected with them. Unlike his habit in such matters, South Australia has allowed other States to get the better of it. Victoria, for one, has for several years adopted the American practice of allowing certain schools conforming to specified requirements the privilege of awarding certificates up to the leaving standard. Were the same principle adopted in this State, the University would still prescribe the conditions of matriculation; but the minor examinations would be left to the teaching staff, who, having the pupils always before them, must have a better knowledge of their attainments than is possible to an outside authority. The argument for examinations is that they are a prophylactic against favoritism. By means of them, also, much trouble is saved; for, instead of the classification being done by the teachers, it is done by the pupils themselves, through their ability or inability to answer questions. The trouble is that the pupils are not always at their best in an examination, and that faulty or inadequate answers may be explicable by nervousness more than ignorance. In any case, the examination is as much a stimulus to cramming as to learning. Where it is a matter of weighing one pupil against another, as in competitions for bursaries, exhibitions, and scholarships, the determination may well be by examinations as now conducted. But where it is a question of the ordinary routine of the schools, one cannot but think that the pressure of the "dead hand" might be somewhat lightened, to the benefit of all concerned.

The Renne memorial medal, commemorative of Professor Renne for more than 40 years Professor of Chemistry at the Adelaide University, has been awarded to one of his students, Mr. Rupert Best, research chemist at the Waite Research Institute.

FINANCED BY THE M.A.W. MASON'S TRIP TO ANTARCTIC

This is the first year of the award which was instituted by the Australian Chemical Institute. It is open to all members of the Australian Chemical Institute under the age of 30. Mr. Best was awarded the medal for his published research work on the chemistry of soils.

They disappear within 12 years apparently to be hardly a correct interpretation of what Dr. Basedow actually said. After more than 140 years of white settlement in New South Wales there are still a few full bloods in that State, and it can be expected that the examinations under the auspices of the Commonwealth will blooded aborigines will survive for at least another 100 years.

Professor Wood-Jones Surprised

Expressing surprise at Dr. Basedow's statement tonight, Professor F. Wood-Jones, of Melbourne, said that he considered the suggestion that the aborigines would become extinct in the next twelve years was unduly pessimistic. In his opinion, it was reasonable to think that the forest would be justifiably. At this stage it was impossible to attempt to forecast with accuracy how long the race would exist. It was, however, determined to be determined mainly by the policy which Australians adopted towards them.

MELBOURNE, Today.

THROUGH the generosity of Mr. Mac Robertson, sufficient money is likely to be available for the publication of the records of Sir Douglas Mawson's last Antarctic expedition.

MAWSON QUEST RECORDS

MacRobertson to Pay for Printing

MELBOURNE, Today.—Through the generosity of Mr. MacRobertson, of Melbourne, sufficient money has been made available for the publication of the records of Sir Douglas Mawson's most recent Antarctic expedition. Prof. A. C. D. Rivett said today that the further gift to his expedition by Mr. MacRobertson was appreciated.

Under the original arrangement any profit accruing from the sale of film of the expedition was to be divided equally between the Commonwealth Government and Mr. Robertson, who has given them the film. Mr. Robertson has intimated that he does not intend claiming his share.

NEWS AND COMMENTS

SCHOOL EXAMINATIONS

INVALUABLE STIMULUS TO STUDY

To the Editor.—Sir—At the end of each year the sort of examinations, like a hardy annual, always crops up. It seems to be a custom to regard examinations as a blight on our education system and a hindrance to the progress of the race. It is, however, the use of such phrases as "the dead hand of examination pressure" and "the iron grip of examinations" and others of a similar nature, that prepares the mind for the public examinations for the Intermediate and Leaving certificates are intended to apply. But I do not think they are justified. So far from being a dead weight on the efforts of educators, these examinations supply not only an invaluable stimulus to the student, but a more impartial criterion of the value of the teaching methods of the school than internal examinations can give.

Prof. A. C. D. Rivett, who is a member of the Mawson Antarctic Committee, said today that Mr. Robertson's further gift to the expedition was very much appreciated.

An effort was being made to induce the Commonwealth to forgo its share of film receipts, in which case the money made available, added to the estimated receipts from the sale of film, would just about pay for the publication.

At present the film receipts can only be estimated. It is expected that the picture will create interest in Australia and Britain, but they are not being sent to the United States, where, in view of past experiments with Australian films, the prospects are not good.

Prof. Rivett said that the publication of the records of Mawson's last expedition had nothing to do with the dispute with the New South Wales Government concerning the 1912-14 records. Those to which the New South Wales Government agreed after a long war to print the records of the 1912-14 expedition, and in return would receive the manuscripts to be housed as a national collection in the Sydney Public Library and Museum.

A clause in the agreement specified that publication must not cost more than £5,000.

Most of the publication is printed, but because of increased costs, the £5,000 limit has been reached, and it is therefore necessary to complete the work, and the Government is not prepared to fund it.

It was announced that he had been awarded the Renne Medal by the Australian Chemical Institute for his research into the chemistry of soils.

Mr. Best's success has brought a fresh breeze to the Waite Agricultural Research Institute, where he is engaged as a chemist. The Chemical Institute awards only two medals each year, and this year both have gone to the Waite Institute. The professor of agricultural chemistry (Prof. J. A. Prescott) won the other, the H. C. Smith Medal.

ADV 33-12-31

PREDICTS EXTINCTION OF ABORIGINES

Dr. Basedow Lectures In Paris

LONDON, December 21.—The Paris correspondent of the Australian Press Association says that Dr. H. C. Basedow, of Adelaide, gave two crowded lectures to the geographical and Anthropological Societies and the Anthropological Society gathering he presided over a gramophone record of corroboree singing.

Dr. Basedow said that he was ashamed to confess that as a result of neglect the Australian aborigines would be an extinct race within twelve years. He is to give a lecture at Hamburg and Vienna.

Mr. Best, who is 28 years of age, was born at Birdwood, and was educated at Adelaide High School and Adelaide University, where he matriculated as a master of science in 1928. For several years he was a lecturer in physical chemistry at the University, and has been at the Waite Institute for three years.

He has been particularly interested in research work in regard to the acidity and salt content of soils. Much important knowledge has been gained in this direction which should prove direct benefit to agriculturists.

Mr. Best was the last honor student of the late Prof. Renne, who was for many years professor of chemistry at the University.

The director of the Waite Institute (Dr. A. E. V. Richardson) and Prof. Prescott, this morning expressed their pleasure that Mr. Best had been awarded the medal. He has worked hard, and deserved the honor, they said.

WAS REFERENCE TO SA. ONLY?

Ethnologist Disagrees

Mr. M. B. Tindale, ethnologist at the Adelaide Museum, said yesterday that he thought Dr. Basedow in his lectures was not referring to the natives in South Australia. The natives of this State are disappearing very fast, he said. "In what Basedow said, he said, 'In the United States there are only 42 full blooded natives left. There are really only four children left in the southern districts, and as they belong to one family they will be the last of their line.'"

"In the desert parts of South Australia may be found tribes living in their natural condition, and if they can be persuaded to keep away from whites they will go on living for generations, but with the inevitable intrusion of white men this is unlikely. The motor car has opened up many districts hitherto not penetrated by white men, and contact with Europeans has generally meant the quick extinction of the natives. It is not that the white man will kill the latter, much more their advent upsets the balance of life for the aborigines, who readily succumb under the new conditions."

ADY 23-12-31

CAMBRIDGE RESEARCH STUDENTSHIP

Through the Prime Minister's Department, the governing body of Emmanuel College, Cambridge, has inquired whether applications for a research studenthip to be awarded in July next. Applications must be forwarded by Dec 30. Details may be obtained from the State Government authorities.

Criticism of Public Examination

A feature of the headmaster's report was his comment on the present system of public examinations. Dr. Ward stated that the latest attack came from an unexpected quarter, the university authorities, who alleged that some students did not like leaving examinations, and were even tired of learning. Mr. Ward-Chambers, of the University, said that he had proposed reforms along these lines.

A. A. Lendon has been re-elected President of the Medical Association.