

Register Dec 20/84

## SCHOOL EXAMINATIONS.

Masters' and Examiners' Reports, Prize-lists, and other formal matter included in the subjoined notices are charged for as advertisements.]

### ST. PETER'S COLLEGIATE SCHOOL. PRIZE DAY.

The half-yearly distribution of prizes in connection with St. Peter's Collegiate School took place in the schoolroom on Friday afternoon. The Bishop of Adelaide (the Right Rev. Dr. Kennion), who is the Visitor of the school, presided, and amongst those on the platform were the Governor (Sir W. C. F. Robinson), the Hon. R. D. Ross, M.P., the Very Rev. Dean Russell, the Ven. Archdeacons Farr and Marryat, Dr. Mayo, Mr. G. W. Hawkes, Mr. H. E. Downer, M.P., and others. The schoolroom was crowded by the scholars and their friends. The singing class, which was under the leadership of Mr. T. W. Lyons, opened the proceedings with the "Carnovale."

The BISHOP then delivered an address. He said—It is a very great pleasure to me to stand up before you again, for this year we have so very much to record that I think will kindle joy in the hearts of all those who are associated with St. Peter's Collegiate School. There are two points to which I would like especially to refer. The first is the change which has taken place in the Council of Governors. We all have heard with great regret of the death of Dr. Moore. He served long and he served well upon the Council, and his interest in the welfare of this school was second to the interest of nobody else. But in his place we have been enabled this day to elect as a Governor one who is an old friend of the school, and who I am quite sure every one will rejoice to hear has again joined the Board. I refer to Mr. G. W. Hawkes. (Applause). The other point is the reduction of fees. It might seem to some that this was hardly necessary, but those of us who thought about the matter could not help seeing that this school was very unfairly handicapped in the very severe competition to which it was exposed by the extraordinary rate of fees we were charging. I know some thought that the class of boys from which it might be expected St. Peter's School would generally be recruited were tolerably capable of paying the higher fee, but we cannot help feeling this—that as time goes on the school should be recruited more and more from those who are of the poorer classes. A vast number of good Churchmen and good citizens who would like to send their boys to this old-fashioned school have hitherto been prevented doing so by the rate of fees charged. The revised rate of fees to be charged is announced in a prospectus, and I can only say that, having already heard we are likely to have an increase in the number of boys attending the school, I think we have taken a step in the right direction. We hear so much about education at this time of the year that I think we ought to be on the watch, lest all the talk should pass off without any appreciable effect being discerned. Are we satisfied with the results of all the educational work now going on in the

colony? Those who have been colonists longer than myself tell me that previously when boys went direct from this and other similar schools to the Universities in England, they distinguished themselves by the success they achieved. It was only yesterday that the Chief Justice was counting up a very long list of men in this colony who had gone home fresh from their school education and had won distinction at the Universities there. But now it has been more than once remarked that there are boys who, after having distinguished themselves in the University here, go home to continue their studies and are not afterwards heard of. I am sorry this change is said to have taken place, and I will ask you what has been the cause of it? Is there nothing in this symptom that we ought to watch with particular care? I read the account of what transpired at the Town Hall yesterday, when His Excellency the Governor presided at the annual meeting of Prince Alfred College, with the very greatest interest; and the report of the Head Master appeared to me to be worthy of considerable attention. He expressed his disapproval of the suggestion made by one of the newspapers that the standard for the matriculation examination at the University should be lowered, and I go very strongly with him upon this point. I do sincerely hope that nothing will be done to lower the standard of the matriculation examination. Indeed, the grave fault that I think I should see at present in our system is this—that when a boy who has been trained with due care under the stimulus of school competition has passed his matriculation examination he enters an atmosphere in which there is not the same keen rivalry and incentive to work that is met with in school life. Therefore he seems to drop back very considerably in the race, and I am afraid we shall have to confess that the passing of boys from a school like this or Prince Alfred College into the University at a very early age has often the effect of giving them a check in their career. If I am right in what I say this is a matter that should receive very careful consideration. What appears to me most desirable is the blending of the University standard with the spirit of

competition that is only found in large schools. We do want more of that. You may say that will grow as the University grows. It is true it will, but can we afford to wait for it? There are some boys who I understand have passed at a remarkably early age from this school into the University. Mr. Chapple, I think, belauded Prince Alfred College on the early age at which its boys passed the matriculation examination; but I believe that the palm of victory, if it be worthy of being awarded on such a subject, would decidedly fall to St. Peter's College. (Applause.) But although that is extremely creditable to the College, the masters, and the boys, I am not sure that in the end it is the healthiest possible sign. I am not sure that to emancipate boys from all the advantages of a school education at so early an age is the best thing for them, because I do not think they are able to derive as much benefit from the University course as they would at a later period in their life. I know the answer that will be made to this. It will probably be of this kind—"We want to get our boys into business, but before then we desire to give them all the learning we possibly can." Well, that sounds very plausible, but the question is, are they really the better for it? Would it not be more to their advantage if instead of going to the University they remained in their schools, where they would be in what I spoke of as an atmosphere of competition, and would enjoy the benefits of a boy's life. After all life at a University is a man's life. When a boy who has passed through a public school goes to a University he feels at once that there is not that restraint upon him he was accustomed to before. The very sense of relief which he experiences sweetens the liberty he claims for himself, and I do not think he always does his very best. These I believe to be the main points that arise in the consideration of the present state of education in relation to the University and the public schools. I do hope that those whose business it is to frame the matriculation examination will take great care that they do not lower the standard or reduce the age at which they can be passed. (Applause.) His Lordship then addressed a few well-chosen remarks to the boys, and, in conclusion, said—The distinguishing characteristic of our school is that it is built upon the teaching of the good old Catechism of the Church of England. I hope that our lads will grow up to be good Churchmen, and by that I mean, not that they will be amongst those who are always going about finding fault with other people's "isms," but amongst those who, having learnt what their duty is, determine that with God's grace they will do it. (Applause.)

The HEAD MASTER (Rev. F. Williams, M.A.) then read his report as follows:—

My report to-day shall be as brief as I can make it, and if it deals mostly with examinations and their results no one will, I trust, draw the inference that we share the common fallacy of thinking that school is to be judged entirely or even mainly by them, or that we look upon them otherwise than as, at best, an evil necessary in the age in which we live. To get the most good out of them in the way of stimulus to the healthy intellectual development of his boys, and of guidance to himself, without letting them hamper or narrow down his aims, is the problem every schoolmaster has to set himself, and we try to solve it as best we may. In University examinations, of which it is natural to speak first, we stand much

where we did last year. Not to go into details, which I dare say most of my hearers have seen elsewhere or have heard from their boys, I may sum up the results by saying that whereas last year about one-ninth of the whole school passed in one or other of the two University examinations, this year the proportion is slightly better—rather more than one-eighth. Such a proportion as that is, I think, quite as large as, taking one year with another, any school is likely to maintain. At the last meeting of the Senate of the University a motion was carried recommending that the limit of age for the junior examination should be permanently fixed at 17 years of age (as it has stood for the last two years) instead of at 16 years as provided by the Statute establishing the examination. I mention it now lest any one should think that because I, at the request of the Collegiate Schools Association, brought forward the motion, therefore, in our opinion here the age as it stood was too little. As a matter of fact the average age this year of our candidates for matriculation was almost exactly the age required for the junior, and the average age of those candidates who passed in the first and second classes of matriculation was under sixteen years. An examination of the ages in previous years would, I have little doubt, tell the same tale. Hence I venture to think that, whatever value there may be in the extension of time to boys who come late to school, or who are unusually backward in development, St. Peter's boys, as a rule, will not need to avail themselves of it. The test of our work afforded by our own examination shows that, although we have passed at the University this year more boys than last both in actual number and in percentage, yet that in the quality of some of the work there is a slight but distinct falling-off. In some subjects more has been attempted than could in the time be mastered

or so thoroughly digested as to secure high marks in examination. This falling-off, to be remedied next half-year, is most noticeable in the geometry and in elementary Greek. Latin grammar also is still weak. Other subjects show that we either maintain our standard or have made an advance. For the prize which your Excellency has offered for the best essay on "A comparison of South Australia with other colonies, the mother country, or both," I have the pleasure of recommending an essay comparing South Australia with Victoria. The writer has shown much industry in the compilation and collation of his facts; but in the actual comparison and deductions from them he is, as would naturally be expected from the limited experience of a school-boy, not so strong. Still as a whole, it is highly deserving of the prize. For your Lord-