

well in a private institution to insist upon the most improved methods of instruction in the most recondite fields of learning, but the State's concern is not to turn out scholars, but to give children an opportunity of becoming useful citizens. We should, therefore, look to the State schools for proficiency in the rudiments of learning. If they gain certificates of excellence in higher branches, so much the better; but we must insist upon a proper attention to the three R's. Now, unfortunately, we do not find that the pupils of our State schools are so far advanced in these as to warrant their attention being directed to what are called accomplishments. As compared with 1887, reading, writing, and spelling have each improved. Arithmetic, however, is even worse than it was last year. On all sides it is agreed that extra attention should be paid to this particular subject, which, somehow or another, is beyond the grasp of the Australian intellect. Why should it be? Our children are by no means less smart than their fellows in Europe. Is there anything wrong with the teaching, or are the examiners too exacting? We confess that we should sooner hear of an improvement in this branch of knowledge amongst the pupils of our State schools than of the spreading of a mere smattering of facts about natural science. On the whole, however, the report is satisfactory. The children are being taught well, and gradually the teachers are being improved in respect of ability. Even as they are the colony has reason to be proud of them, and of the schools which they officer. Both teachers and inspectors are making every effort to progress in the path which seems to them best fitted to lead to perfection. It would not be correct to say that the inspectors are to be commended for the reports which they make. These are, beyond a doubt, most long-winded and verbose arrangements. They say in a page what a person who is not an inspector would say in a paragraph, and it might be well for the Minister to consider whether or not their reports should be cut down within reasonable dimensions.

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The Register.

ADELAIDE : MONDAY, JUNE 10, 1889.

THE SCHOOL OF MINES.

The School of Mines and Industries was formally opened by the Governor on Saturday. The large and interested audience present on the occasion testified to the high regard in which this important enterprise is held, and even if we allow that some of the thousands came to see and to be seen, the vast majority was plainly on the side of those who believe in technical education and in the latest means secured for its furtherance. The prophet of the cause explained in an eloquent speech the objects of the School. It would require a man of even greater ingenuity than Dr. Cockburn to say in a speech to the people something true which has not been said before on the subject of technical education. If he were addressing an assemblage of experts he would doubtless be able to advance arguments of more or less newness, but speaking to people who showed by their presence that they believed in the system, he very wisely refrained from trying to persuade them of the truth and value of what they already held to be valuable and true. We heartily congratulate the Council of the School on the success which they have achieved. Their most sanguine expectations have been more than realized. Instead of the few students for whom they made mental provision they have now nearly 100 in active work, and when shortly the classes for artisans shall have been opened they will reckon their number at least twofold or threefold. Much of the success which has attended their efforts is of course due to the public sense of the need of such an institution. Much also is due to the energy and public spirit displayed by the Technical Education Commissioners, and subsequently by the Council of the School. But most of the success is due to the Chairman of the Council, Dr. Cockburn, who has devoted himself heart and soul to the work. In so doing he has conferred a great benefit on the country. He is regarded by the public as the moving spirit, and none of his colleagues will grudge him the public recompense of especial gratitude.

If Dr. Cockburn makes any mistake in his public remarks about the School, it lies in his tendency to make definitions. When he received the students two or three months ago he calmly defined technical education to be "useful education," and proceeded to support his definition by claiming that "'useful education' was a thing of modern growth." We are pleased to notice that he has tacitly discarded this definition now. It would be unpleasant to think that people were not usefully educated until somebody instituted technical schools, and some would be inclined to doubt the advisability of applying the expression "useful education" exclusively to instruction in the manual or technical branches of knowledge. Dr. Cockburn's latest definition, though still rather unsatisfactory, is an improvement on the first. Technical education, he says, is "such work as would fit students for the work of