

"The Argus"
5th January 1899.

THE MATRICULATION
EXAMINATION.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE ARGUS.

Sir.—I have read the reports of the examiners, and it appears to be high time that some very strong strictures should be passed upon the work, not of the candidates, but of the examiners. By the language he uses, which may possibly be meant to be smart, and by the results of the examination in chemistry, Professor Masson condemns himself. There are no doubt a good many incompetent teachers of this subject in some schools, but it is an insult to common sense to assert practically that all the pass candidates, coming as they did from fifty different schools, know nothing. Again, in another report, I note the following sentence:—"It is best to send in a plain and unaffected statement of how they do think, rather than of how they think they ought to think!" This, again, may possibly be meant to be smart. It is certainly meaningless. But one would at least imagine that an examiner would take the trouble to express himself grammatically. Education in secondary schools may be imperfect, but no such sentence as the above could be written by any boy above the middle school without severe punishment resulting. I do not draw attention to it in any spirit of captious criticism; but as an evidence of the carelessness shown in their work by the examiners. That the writer erred in ignorance one cannot suppose, and it must therefore follow that he did not take the trouble to revise even once what he had written. And this is largely the trouble. The examiners need to exercise more care, and more reason. The majority of them have no experience of teaching boys, and they appear to regard the matriculation examination as an opportunity for indulging in humour. I assure you, Sir, that for many parents the matter is a serious one, and an increasing feeling of mistrust in our University is spreading through the colony. We want a fixed standard to work towards, and we want to feel sure that a boy who has reached that standard will succeed, and that one who has not reached it will fail. At present this is not the case. You drew attention in a recent article to the large percentage of failures in arithmetic as compared with algebra. The reason was this. The algebra paper was a fair, straightforward paper on algebra, and the arithmetic was not a fair, straightforward paper on arithmetic. I always advise candidates now, not to take arithmetic, for I know by experience that a lad may be a really good arithmetician, and may yet be ploughed by some such humorous question as, "Is it right to say twice three is seven, or twice three are seven?" Let me assure the examiners that it is a quite sufficiently hard task to find out what a boy does know. To attempt to confuse him is wholly a work of supererogation. I am always reminded by the arithmetic paper of a snub administered to me years ago by Dr. Ambrose Wilson. I asked him to explain a difficulty in a Greek chorus, which I could not elucidate myself. He looked at it for some time, and then said, "Any fool can ask a question which it would take a very wise man to answer."

To prevent any insinuations I may remark that I sent up 20 candidates in chemistry, and that our results were perfectly satisfactory, so that I am writing in that respect quite impartially.—I am, &c.,

ARTHUR S. WORKMAN.

Hamilton College, Jan. 2.

"The Register"
21st January 1899.

THE LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR.

On enquiry at Government House yesterday we learned that His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor passed a fair night on Thursday, and was no worse when seen by Dr. Lendon on Friday morning. The report in the evening indicated a slight improvement in some of the symptoms. Captain Wallington thinks that the deferred Executive Council meeting may be held at Marble Hill to-day if His Excellency appears to be well enough. The Public Library Board at their meeting on Friday afternoon passed a resolution of sympathy with their President. The general anxiety which prevails regarding the health of the Lieutenant-Governor, and the sympathy with him in his illness which finds expression amongst all classes of the community, testifies to the strength of the hold the right hon. gentleman has secured upon the goodwill and affection of South Australians. Not only are numerous enquiries made at Government House, but His Excellency's indisposition forms the principal topic of conversation amongst people meeting each other in the streets.

"The Register"
1st February 1899.

The attention of our readers is called to an advertisement inviting applications for the position of teacher of theory of music in the Conservatorium. Full particulars may be obtained from the registrar. The attention of intending students of the Conservatorium and competitors for the Elder scholarships is also called to the advertisements appearing elsewhere.

"The Register"
20th January 1899.

THE LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR.

We are informed by Captain Wallington that the Lieutenant-Governor passed a good night on Wednesday, but Dr. Lendon could not say that he found in him any improvement when he visited him at Marble Hill yesterday afternoon. His Excellency is not at present allowed to see visitors, and is transacting as little public business as possible. The Lieutenant-Governor much appreciates the kind and sympathetic messages which he has received from his numerous friends, though it would be a great kindness and convenience if enquiries regarding the state of his health were made to Captain Wallington, at Government House, instead of to Marble Hill direct. We are asked to state that any fresh development or improvement in His Excellency's condition will be at once communicated to the Press.