



Zealand, Professor Salmon said, for a teacher to give up for a time his appointment in order to attend the University and complete a graduate's course. There was no calling so laborious or so important and which gave such few prizes as that of the public teacher. The Hon. F. W. Holder, who was indicated by general public opinion not merely the permanent Treasurer of South Australia, but as the Treasurer of federated Australia, fortunately for himself left the profession to which his less fortunate contemporaries adhered, with the result that he obtained political distinction which was denied to them. If they wished to attract to the teaching profession the best minds of the community they must increase its advantages. They must raise its social and its educational status. They must recognize that teaching was a profession as much as divinity, law, or medicine, or engineering. They must recognize also that the teacher, like the candidate for those professions, should have the best training, with all the advantages of academic study and society and corporate life and the companionship of his fellows in his subsequent career. This was the psychological moment for action in the matter. The offer he had referred to had been under consideration for eighteen months. They did not wish to hurry the department, and he knew there had been no want of careful consideration of it by the Minister of Education, but they could not consistently with their duty hold it indefinitely open. They wanted to begin work next year. Concurrently with that offer there was a widespread determination throughout the colony that every child worthy of it should have the advantage of secondary and advanced education. *South Australia. (Cheers.)* Were the State-school teachers to have no part in that work? He for one advocated the obliteration of every line of demarcation between teacher in public and in the advanced schools. He would like to see the education regulations so far amended that a certificated teacher could take service in any one of the great grammar

schools without losing his status or claims for promotion in the department. It was under the observation of them all that two of the most successful Head Masters of the grammar schools in South Australia had their first training—and still participated in its benefits—as elementary teachers. But over and above all personal and professional considerations there was the great question of public weal. The scholars of the secondary schools and students were few in comparison with the great army of boys and girls who attended the elementary schools. To the State-school teacher was entrusted the task of moulding the character of the coming generation. No pains should be spared, no reasonable expense was too great, for the adequate equipment of those who had the future of South Australia in their hands. He had much pleasure in declaring the Conference open. (Prolonged cheers.)

The Minister of Education, Hon. R. Butler, M.P., who was received with applause, thanked those present for the very hearty reception they had given him, and hoped he might take it as an evidence that his administration during the few months in which he had occupied one of the most important public positions to be attained by any man in the community had met with their satisfaction. (Applause.) If that were so, it was specially gratifying to him, for he felt that in following so experienced an administrator as the Hon. Dr. Cockburn, and one who had had opportunities that had been denied to him of gaining the highest culture and a University degree, and one who was also an enthusiast in educational matters, he was accepting a heavy responsibility. He hoped that the cordial reception they had accorded him was an evidence that he should have the confidence, the sympathy, and the friendship of every one, both inspectors and teachers, who was engaged in carrying on the great work of education in South Australia. (Applause.) He wished to assure them, not only on his own behalf, but on behalf of his Ministerial colleagues, that they were sincerely anxious to help the teachers in every possible way. (Applause.) As the Chief Justice had remarked, the able Treasurer was an old public-school teacher himself, and on that ground alone he would naturally like to hold out a helping hand to those who were at present engaged in the work. Of course the Government recognized that they had every reason to be proud of our educational system, and he was exceedingly pleased to hear it remarked at that exceedingly interesting entertainment which had taken place on the previous Saturday night that our system was one which South Australia had every reason to be proud of, and not only proud of her system but proud of the children of the colony and of the teachers as well. If the people who were continually crying down our educational system, and talking about educational mania, would only visit our public schools or attend such an entertainment as that recently given in the Exhibition Building they would realize, as he had realized, much more since he came into Ministerial office, what an excellent system they had, what splendid control the children were under, and what a warm spirit there was between the teachers and the children. The question of education had been very much in evidence during the last few months, both inside and outside of Parliament. He had had the privilege outside the House of addressing a number of young men in Gawler on the subject of "Technical Education," and from his seat in Parliament he had also had the opportunity of speaking on the question of education from various aspects. He had had to justify—not a very difficult task—the action of the Government in abolishing the fifth-class fees in public schools—(applause)—and he had been cheered by the words of the Chief Justice in advocating the right of every one, whether of the poor or rich class, in South Australia to the best education which it was possible to give. The Government were forced into this action, not unwillingly, by the reports which they had from the inspectors, who were unanimously of opinion that the system of having free education up to the standard and attempting to collect fees afterwards was working very badly, was demoralizing both children and parents, and was absolutely preventing the establishment of fifth classes in country schools. Then he had another very exacting task. A certain gentleman was continually picking up in the House and making statements that our system was godless and immoral, and that gentlemen and those

who thought with him would only visit our public schools they would see that the teachers were as anxious for the moral training of the pupils as any teacher in a private school could be, and were just as keenly anxious to see the young people grow up to be good men and women as any class of teacher to be found in the civilized world. Then a more important question had been raised. A motion had been moved by Mr. Batchelor, M.P., to the effect that increased facilities should be given to the children attending our public schools for securing a higher education. (Applause.) It had been his own pleasing duty to submit to the House some figures which showed most conclusively that the talent in this colony was not confined to the children in private schools, but that as good talent could be found in the public schools if it had the opportunity to develop itself. He showed by the scholarships which had been taken at the University how excellent had been the grounding that had been given to the children in our public schools. In replying to the statement made by Sir John Downer that our Advanced School for Girls had been a miserable failure, he had shown that out of something like 180 girls who had presented themselves for the senior examination over 120 were from the Advanced School for Girls. (Applause.) The Government were now asking the House of Assembly to consent to an increase in the number of exhibitions and bursaries. The Chief Justice had referred to the question of giving our teachers an opportunity of securing a University training. He confessed that if the children in our public schools, or any very large number of them, were going to have an opportunity for getting the highest education obtainable in South Australia it must be by raising the standard of education among the teachers. (Applause.) The Chief Justice had remarked that this matter had been left in abeyance for eighteen months. He had not been in office eighteen months, but he hoped to be. (Laughter.) But the Government had been very busy during the last few weeks, and he hoped very shortly to ask representatives of the University to meet himself and probably the Treasurer with some inspectors, to discuss this question, and see if they could arrive at a decision which would be satisfactory to the Government, to the people, and to the University as well. (Applause.) Then with his colleagues he had consented to allow the teachers a week's holiday at midwinter. He was sure that would meet with their approval. He could not too strongly impress on his hearers the necessity of securing if possible a better average attendance. When they remembered that there were about 67,000 pupils on our public-school rolls, and that the average attendance was only 42,000, he thought the parents should recognize that it was their duty to assist the teachers in making the children attend regularly. He wanted to thank the teachers for what they were doing to encourage in their pupils a love for agriculture. He knew they were doing this chiefly for the love of it, and he recognized that they were accomplishing exceedingly good work. They wanted to stop the cry which had been going on for so long of "Let us get into the city, where we can get an easy billet and avoid the difficulties which beset the agriculturist." If the teachers would only continue their work of encouraging the children to take an interest in scientific and practical agronomy they would soon be able to raise the cry again, "Back to the land." The result would be that the productions of South Australia would greatly increase, and increased prosperity would also ensue. During his spare moments he had read with great pleasure the many able addresses delivered to the teachers of Victoria at the last two Conferences. The result of that reading was that he had now a clearer conception of what education really was, and of how necessary it was in this young colony to draw forth and put to the most profitable use the very best that our young people were capable of. If South Australia was to hold her own in competition with the other colonies and become part of a great nation, it was of the utmost importance that our children must distinguish clearly between right and wrong. He felt sure the teachers had taken a wise step in establishing that Union. He was equally sure that they were doing all they could to encourage in our children a love of what was right. They must not attend only to the educational part of the character of the young. It was quite as important to attend to the moral side of the character as well. If he might use a few words from Milton he would say:—
"With a people inflamed with the study of learning and the admiration of virtue stirred up with high hopes of living to be brave men and worthy patriots that they will govern themselves wisely and well and be able to come to a righteous and honest solution of the many social problems which must confront us as time goes on." Teaching to be thoroughly successful must be a labour of love, but often even in a labour of love they did not seem to have enough patience. Yet the thought that the training of our children was the noblest work of all, and that the future of this colony, whether for well or ill, rested with them, should be a sustaining incentive in oftentimes a weary task. He would say when discouraged by seeming failures that they should try to realize the power of individual effort as known to them all in the story of the greatest teacher. The responsibility resting upon those from the head to the very least who instructed the thousands of little ones who filled our State schools was a solemn one, and one that should not be lightly undertaken. In conclusion he would quote a few beautiful lines from Coleridge:—
O'er wayward childhood wouldst thou hold firm
And sun thee in the light of happy faces?
Love, hope, and patience, thou must be thy grace,
And in thy own heart let them first keep school.

Yet haply there will come a weary day, when, o'er-taxed at length,
Both love and hope beneath the load give way:
Then with a statue's smile, a statue's strength,
Stands the mute sister Patience, nothing loth,
And, both supporting, does the work of both.

On the motion of the President, seconded, by Mr. A. A. Wickstead, a hearty vote of thanks was accorded to the Chief Justice and the Minister of Education for their presence and for the admirable addresses which they had delivered.

The Conference then adjourned till 2 p.m.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS.

On resuming the first business on the agenda-paper was the election of officers, which resulted as follows:—President, Mr. C. B. Whillas; Vice-Presidents, Messrs. J. Harry and S. Jackman; Treasurer, Mr. J. Donnell; Minute Secretary, Mr. R. T. Burnard; Corresponding Secretary, Mr. A. H. Neale; Assistant Secretary, Mr. G. Charlesworth.

AMENDMENT OF RULES.

Mr. J. Harry moved and Mr. A. H. Neale seconded:—"That the following be added to the rules of the Union:—The immediate ex-President shall be ex officio a member of the General Committee and of the executive." Carried.

APPOINTMENT OF ASSISTANT INSPECTOR.

Mr. M. M. Maughan moved, and Mr. R. T. Burnard seconded:—"That this Conference expresses its approval of the action of the executive of the Union in the matter of the appointment of the Assistant Inspector." Carried.

SUPERANNUATION FUND BOARD.

On the motion of Mr. C. B. Whillas, seconded by Mr. A. Williams, it was resolved:—"That when the next vacancy on the Board of the Superannuation Fund occurs it is desirable that a teacher should be elected to fill such vacancy."

ROOM FOR USE OF TEACHERS.

Mr. A. H. Neale moved and Mr. W. H. Dunnell seconded:—"That it is desirable that a room be secured for the use of teachers." The mover emphasized the need that existed for the teachers securing a room which should partake somewhat of the nature of a club. The motion was carried.

THE CONVERSAZIONE.

The University library was crowded in the evening, when a social gathering of teachers was held. The guests were received on their arrival by the Chancellor, the Right Hon. S. J. Way, and Mrs. Way. The first part of the evening was devoted to a lecture by Professor Mitchell, who took as his subject "What is Poetry?" He first dealt with a number of definitions which had been given from time to time, and which were usually more or less incorrect. There was a certain form of composition which was poetical, and only when this was joined to poetical matter could they have true poetry. They did wrong to read poetry merely for its arguments. There was not an argument or philosophical deduction in poetry that had not previously been much better expressed by prose writers. The true aim of poetry was neither to teach knowledge nor action, but to convey what might be called the third element in mental life—feeling, which included passion, affection, joy and sorrow, love and hatred. True poetry was distinguishable from other literature by its purport. There might be scientific accuracy, exact descriptions and speculation in the poet's production, but none of these were his first aim, for above all else the poet sought to convey to the reader a certain state of mind. Carlyle had said that all those who could read a poem well were poets. But the word "poet" originally signified one who invented, and that was far different from the mere power of appreciating what had already been accomplished. The Professor gave a number of extracts from the leading English poets to illustrate the various points of the lecture, upon the conclusion of which he was loudly cheered. During the evening the following programme of vocal and instrumental music was presented by the students of the Elder Conservatorium:—Piano solo, valse in A flat (Chopin), Miss Maudo Brown; song, "The soul's awakening" (Haddock), Miss Minna Gebhardt; violin solo, "Romanze" (Lauterbach), Master E. Aldorman; song, "Kings of the road" (Bevan), Mr. Max Fotheringham; instrumental trio, Largo con Expressione, op. 1, No. 2 (Beethoven) Misses E. Ward, R. Read, and F. M. Ward; piano solo, Andante and Rondo Capriccioso (Mendelssohn), Miss Elsie Hamilton (Elder scholar); song, "A summer night" (Goring Thomas), Miss Isabella Boreford; violin solo, "Adagio" (Ries), Miss Nora K. Thomas (Elder scholar). Those whose tastes turned to more practical matters were not overlooked, for simultaneously with the concert in the library Mr. A. J. Higgin and students gave an exhibition of chemical apparatus and experiments in the chemical laboratory. Mr. R. W. Chapman conducted a number of interesting experiments with soap films in the physical lecture-room. In the instrument-room, Mr. C. H. Reeves exhibited the "kromskop," an apparatus for colour photography. Talking-machines were shown and described by Mr. J. H. M. Davidson. A physiological and microscopic display was presented by Mr. W. Fuller and students in the laboratory, and Mr. J. B. Allen conducted a number of experiments in the physical laboratory.