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—Two Tedious Treks.—

Graphically the lecturer indicated the incidents of daring and of heroism in the long journey of 122 days to "farthest south" and back. With equal detail, but modestly giving the glory to his companions, Professor David then sketched the tedious march of his own party on foot, over coastal ice for 1,200 miles, for every two miles of which three had to be walked owing to the necessity of returning over every stage to bring up the second sledge on the outward track. He heaped encomiums on Dr. Mawson, as one of the most valuable men in the expedition, who loved science for its own sake; but the audience showed in no uncertain way its appreciation of his own endeavours and heroic devotion to the extension of knowledge. The lecture closed with references to Peary's discovery of the north pole, and to the coming expedition of Capt. Scott, which will shortly attempt to complete the work begun by the Shackleton expedition, and to fly the Union Jack at the southern extreme of the globe.

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PUBLIC EDUCATION.

MINISTER'S REPORT.

The report of the Minister of Education for 1909 shows that there were 722 schools in operation, compared with 712 for 1908. The principal increase was three district high schools. The number of children instructed was 59,133, and in attendance 53,748. The latter total represents a decrease of 409. The daily average attendance was 38,255, an increase of 62. The figures indicate an improvement in the regularity of attendance. In May the average reached 80 per cent., but owing to the prevalence of infectious diseases it presently declined till in December it was no higher than 73 per cent. Special attention had been given to the health of the children, and in July last a Health Inspector of Schools was appointed to visit the schools, cleanse premises, advise teachers, and visit homes.

—Teachers.—

The total number of teachers of all grades employed on December 31, 1909, was 1,411, 27 less than the number employed in the previous year. In addition, there were 61 students undergoing training at the University Training College and 92 pupil teachers taking their preliminary course of training at the Adelaide High School. Exclusive of the teachers of sewing (117) there were 1,076 adult teachers employed. Of this number 560 were classified teachers; 62 have passed through the High School and a pupil teacher's course, but have not gone through the Training College, while the remaining 454—42 per cent. of the number—have not had the advantage of an adequate course of training. The efforts made by many of these teachers of acquire knowledge relating to their work and to improve their general proficiency are worthy of all praise, and the inspectors testify to the success attending their efforts. The department is making every effort to increase and improve the facilities for training teachers for small country schools; but is greatly hampered by the paucity of the number of candidates for such work. To keep the schools open, the department is often obliged to appoint teachers who would be greatly benefited by a few months' further training. The classified teachers are divided into six classes. During the past year these teachers have shown a strong desire to improve their status, and many have qualified for higher classification. The proportion of men teachers to women teachers has fallen from 60 per cent. to 55 per cent. during the decade. A tendency towards improvement in this respect is shown in the figures relating to pupil teachers. Out of every hundred young people joining the service 10 years ago 14 were boys. Last year the percentage of boy entrants had risen to 32.

—Teachers for "Assisted" Schools.—

Of late the difficulty in obtaining teachers for assisted schools has greatly increased. Several causes have operated to produce this result. The general prosperity, the result of a succession of good seasons, has considerably reduced the number of applicants from country districts. Increasing numbers of girls in the larger centres of population find employment as telephone operators, nurses, &c. Such positions are more attractive than teaching in a remote, isolated country school, far from home, relatives, and friends. The loneliness and the monotony of the life are not its only drawbacks; one other is more serious—the salary is not a fixed amount, but fluctuates with the attendance. The regulations provide that where an average attendance of 12 can be maintained throughout the year, a provisional school may be established with a commencing salary of £72 for women and £84 for men, with annual increments. Where the average attendance is below 12 payment is made at the rate of £6 per head on the average attendance. When by reason of sickness or indifference on the part of the parents the attendance falls, the teacher's payment falls proportionately. In some districts the anxiety of the parents for the education of their children leads them to render some assistance to the teacher when the attendance shrinks; but in others parents are unwilling to accept any responsibility in the matter, considering that the whole duty of providing teachers rests with the department. During the past year it has been clearly shown that the supply of teachers for assisted schools cannot be maintained unless the parents concerned are willing to assist in making the teacher's position more comfortable and more assured.

—Training.—

Important developments have taken place during the year in the method of training teachers. Three institutions are mainly con-

cerned in this work—the Observation School, the Adelaide High School, and the Training College connected with the University. At the Observation School a special class has been formed to assist young people wishing to become provisional teachers to pass the examination prescribed for such candidates. Those who succeed in passing the examination are trained in practical teaching in the "Model Provisional School" attached to the Observation School. Before receiving an appointment every candidate takes charge of this school of 20 children for such a period as the head master (Mr. Fairweather) may think necessary. As practically all provisional teachers now joining the service obtain some training in practical teaching at this school before taking up their studies in the country a very considerable improvement in the work done in the small country schools may be confidently expected. In a three years' course at the Adelaide High School time will be found for a greater amount of professional training than has been possible in the past. Experience shows this to be necessary for those who, upon the completion of their pupil teacher's course, do not enter the Training College, preferring to take appointments as acting assistants (unclassified teachers). Of 56 persons eligible to enter the Training College in January, 1910, only 35, or 62 per cent., signified their intention to complete their training. In the interests of the schools it is necessary to improve the practical training of such teachers as do not proceed to the Training College on the completion of their pupil teacher course, and who lose the benefits of the training in practical teaching which that institution provides. The work at the Training College at the University has undergone considerable modification during the year. For the first time students have been allowed to say whether they will take a course of one or two years. Those who prefer to enter for one year will take a course of study leading to the infant teachers' certificate or to the primary teachers' certificate. Those who elect to remain two years will, during their first year, take the course of study of the primary school teachers' certificate, and in their second year will prepare for the diploma of education, which, it is hoped, the University will arrange to issue. For the infant teachers' certificate the curriculum will include education, English literature, elementary psychology, and child study, infant school method, school hygiene, theory of physical culture, singing, drawing, Nature study, and manual work. In addition to this the students take up one of more subjects of the degree course at the University. For the primary teachers' certificate the curriculum is similar, but the work is dealt with more specifically with reference to the primary school. From January to March two days per week will be devoted to teaching in schools affiliated with the Training College. From March to November this time will be reduced to three hours per week, and from November to December the students will give all their time to observing other teachers at work, to actual teaching, and to criticism lessons. This work will be done under the direct supervision of Inspector McBride and his assistants. Sixty-one (61) students were in the University Training College during the year, 35 having remained from 1908, and 26 new students having been admitted. In December 27 were reported as fit to be placed in charge of schools, as they had completed their course; classification was deferred in 6 cases; 26 were allowed to remain a second year; and 2 were allowed to remain a third year. Six teachers graduated in arts in December.

—Co-ordination.—

In connection with the work of the high schools and district high schools, it is remarked:—At Port Pirie a beginning has been made in the co-ordination of educational agencies, which should have far-reaching results. The buildings belonging to the School of Mines have been removed from their former positions and re-erected on the High School grounds. The students of the School of Mines will use some of the High School rooms, while the pupils of the High School will have access to the laboratories and workshops of the School of Mines. One physics laboratory, one chemical laboratory, and one set of workshops will serve the needs of both schools. This plan should secure the greatest educational efficiency at the minimum cost.

—New Departments.—

The Adelaide School of Arts and the Adelaide Observatory have been transferred to the Education Department.

—Buildings.—

During the year the following buildings have been erected:—Gilles Plains, school and residence, £1,400; Kingscote, K.L. school and residence, £1,450; Millicent, school and improvement to teacher's residence, £1,900; Port Pirie High School, £3,777; Wirrabara Forest, school and residence, £1,450. New schools are in pro-

UNIVERSITY TRAINING COLLEGE.

To the Editor.

Sir—In your issue of Tuesday I am glad to see the letters from "Student," "Fair-play," and "Sympathy," respecting the University teacher students. I strongly support the students in their protest against unfair and autocratic rule. The new Ministry will, I hope, have a thorough enquiry made not only into the students' case, but also into the whole education system, as a great deal of dissatisfaction exists. The Education Department has not been fair with the students in this matter, and its present action amounts to oppression.

I am, Sir, &c., L. Y. W.