

TECHNICAL TRAINING.

Judging by his opening report the new Superintendent of Technical Education appears to have grappled with the problems ahead of him in a businesslike manner and the branch of public instruction under his care, which has been sadly neglected in this State, should receive a valuable impetus. He certainly hits the nail on the head when he points out that the State would be the richer by having a large number of skilled and efficient technical workers and adds that if there is not a steady demand for such men with proper remuneration they will become discontented and turn to work other than that for which their training has fitted them. The position is apparently succinctly summed up by Mr. Fenner and to his remarks may be added the further contention that the necessity for the demand must be created by a strong feeling of public opinion with a pronounced desire for the fullest encouragement of the best work in crafts and manufactures. Failing this there is likely to be a supply of technical experts with no outlet for their abilities, and the whole system must end in failure. Something has plainly been radically wrong with pre-existing system of technical training when it has been found, as the superintendent states, that very little of the higher grades of technical work has been taught. The greater number of students attending the technical classes are in the lower grades, and in the less valuable classes of dress-making, domestic, training, shorthand, typewriting, &c. A majority of the students attend a month or two and drift out instead of completing a two years' course which is considered at least worth while. It is not surprising that such results should be referred to as great wastage. The determination to discontinue unproductive and dilletante classes is one that should meet with approval, for nothing is more essential than that the training should be such as will be readily applied for the practical benefit of the State. Use and not ornament is undoubtedly the guiding principle which should govern training of this character. Another scheme suggestive of the story of Mahomet and the mountain, in which it is proposed that where it is impossible for agricultural students to attend classes, the classes shall be brought to them, seems to be well worthy of a trial. It is not practicable for every boy who wishes to follow farming pursuits to take advantage of the facilities available at Roseworthy, and to overcome this difficulty Mr. Fenner proposes to organise a travelling technical school. As he says, South Australia is at present mainly an agricultural State, and its chief development must be in the direction of increased productiveness in the areas cultivated, and in methods for opening up other areas for cultivation. In addition to the ordinary studies provided for in the public school curriculum, it is proposed by means of these travelling schools to instruct the farmers-to-be in farm blacksmithing, farm carpentry and building construction, agricultural botany, agricultural chemistry, and physics, or other selected subjects. Many will, no doubt, regard the proposal as a bold experiment, but it seems to be one capable of far-reaching and beneficial results. The portion of the report, however, which should appeal most to the industrial section of the people is that referring to the junior technical schools, otherwise known as preparatory trade schools or pre-vocational schools. These are described as a fundamental necessity of whatever system of technical education is adopted here, and no one will be found to dispute this assertion. It is, indeed, in preparing the youth of the State to become expert artisans, capable of holding their own in competition with the outside world in every department of industrial activity that most is to be expected from technical training, and in any scheme furthering this very desirable end, the expert now in charge of this department should meet with the heartiest support and encouragement of employers and employees in all industries.

TECHNICAL EDUCATION.

Mr. Fenner has lost no time in furnishing to the Director of Education his report on the enlargement of the present system of technical education in South Australia. The progressive character of the education movement in all parts of the civilised world has long been recognised. Systems which have won the approval of one generation are regarded by another as antiquated and ineffective. No doubt the explanation is to be found largely in the changing needs of the community. If education is to fulfil its mission it must be closely related to life, and the complex conditions of modern civilisation are making continually increasing demands on the individual. Keen competition in all vocations calls imperatively for efficiency, and to supply this the world is learning to look to educational systems. Australia is very properly craving for a full industrial life, and to attain the goal it is recognised that the schools must play an important part. Mr. Fenner's report may be regarded as a contribution towards the solution of a problem which is by no means easy. The solution, it is certain, will be gradual and continuous rather than sudden and final. Technical education is a comprehensive term of large content. Such education can be acquired only in part in schools, no matter how well organised and equipped they may be. But the basis on which the student will build may be supplied there, and there the direction which his education will take may be determined. It is for these and other reasons desirable that the work should be begun at a comparatively early stage of the child's career.

A good deal of excellent work in connection with technical education has already been accomplished in this State. Mr. Fenner points out that the School of Mines and Industries combines the functions of a technical university with those of a vocational school, and he refers appreciatively to the excellence of the diploma courses. Very naturally, he recognises that the institution must remain the chief higher technical school in the State. With such results as it has secured no other conclusion is possible. But he is quite unnecessarily concerned as to the danger of producing an excessive number of diploma holders in the higher courses. The difficulty of the courses itself imposes a very substantial limitation on the number who will win diplomas. Neither is it necessary to restrict the number "unless there is a definite demand for them within the State." Men who have qualified at the School of Mines have found careers in other parts of Australia, and, in fact, all over the world. It would be a mistake to endeavor to impose any narrow limits to the legitimate area over which the holders of high credentials may look for the employment of their well-trained energies. "The world is my workshop" may well be the motto of any ambitious young man who is conscious of possessing qualifications which will enable him to render valuable service in whatever part of the globe opportunity may offer. Nor is this all. It is never desirable that there should be an exact correspondence between the number of men of high attainment and the number of positions in which all their skill could be fully utilised. There should always be room for selection, even if the result is that a proportion of the well-trained men have to occupy positions in which their powers are more than adequate for the calls made on them. The real danger is in keeping standards too low, not in setting them too high. Moreover, Australia is a young and virile country, with a great future before it. Its industries are capable of almost unlimited expansion. If our educational system should produce an apparent superabundance of highly-skilled men, the inevitable effect will be a more rapid development of the industries in which their qualifications could be turned to good account. South Australian policy cannot be based on the inference drawn by Mr. Fenner from the factors visible at present that this State will never be either a great mining or a great manufacturing State. There is already an important copper-mining in-

dustry, capable of large development, in our midst, while the great Barrier mines are just across our border in a district which is geographically, if not politically, South Australian. Some day the apriferous resources of this State will receive the systematic attention they undoubtedly deserve. That there is no future for the Central State of Australia as a manufacturing State is a hard saying. It is true that we have no coal, but our favorable geographical position will tell increasingly in our favor. Mr. Fenner is on quite solid ground, however, when he suggests that the chief development of the State must be looked for along the line of agriculture. His scheme for supplementing the Roseworthy College with a number of travelling technical schools located in centres which will represent the different rural interests and conditions, appears to have been carefully thought out. The value of applying technical knowledge to the work of cultivation of the soil has been demonstrated over and over again in this State, but never with more convincing force than is supplied by the report of the wheat yields in different districts, which appears in another column. If all previous records have been broken, it is not only because the season has been propitious, but because our farmers are more and more adopting enlightened methods of cultivation.

Daily Herald 19.1.14

EDUCATION REGULATIONS.

In Executive Council yesterday approval was given to new regulations framed by the Education Department in respect of senior and junior exhibitions. Provision is made for eight senior exhibitions of the value of £40 per annum, tenable for two years at a Government High School or other secondary school approved by the Minister. These exhibitions are open for competition among pupils of secondary schools whose homes are so situated that, in the opinion of the Minister, they cannot attend a Government High School or other secondary school without undue inconvenience or expense. Three senior exhibitions shall be reserved for competition among pupils who for six months immediately prior to the senior public examination in November of the year in which they are competing have been in regular attendance at a country secondary school. It is provided that any of the restricted senior exhibitions not so awarded may be added to the number of senior exhibitions open to any duly qualified candidate. Eight junior exhibitions of the value of £40 are also offered on similar terms to those of the senior, and four junior exhibitions of the value of £20, tenable for two years at a High School or other secondary schools are open for competition among pupils of secondary schools within a radius of 10 miles of the G.P.O., Adelaide. These exhibitions will be awarded by the Minister on the recommendation of the Director of Education, whose recommendation shall be based on the result of the junior public examination. New regulations in relation to the agreement between the Education Department and junior teachers and the department and students in the Teachers' Training College were also approved of.

Register 9.1.14

CONCERNING PEOPLE.

His Excellency the Governor-General (Sir Ronald Munro-Ferguson), attended by his A.D.C. (Capt. C. P. Firth), and accompanied by Gen. H. E. Foster (Chief of the General Staff), left for Melbourne by the express on Thursday. The viceregal visit to Adelaide was essentially a military one, and on Wednesday the party inspected the military pay office and the Mitcham Camp. On Thursday morning they were shown over the Gawler encampment, and during the afternoon the Governor-General, who is greatly interested in forestry, accompanied the Premier (Hon. C. Vaughan) and Attorney-General (Hon. J. H. Vaughan) to the Jubilee Exhibition Building to inspect a quantity of timber of different varieties that had been treated with creosote by Mr. H. H. Corbin, the Instructor in Forestry of the Woods and Forests Department. The object of the treatment is to render the timber proof against attacks by white ants and also to prevent decay. His Excellency the Governor (Sir Henry Galway), who is on his way to Tasmania, with his Private Secretary (Mr. Leph Winter), was a passenger on the same train as that which conveyed the Governor-General. Among those on the platform when the party left were the Chief Justice (Hon. G. J. R. Murray), the State Commandant (Brig.-Gen. Irving), Lieut.-Cols. Dollman and Hanson, Major Pendlebury, D.A.A.G., and Lieut. Reese.

D. H. 26.1.14

TECHNICAL EDUCATION

LECTURES FOR WORKERS

MR. E. C. BAKER'S SUGGESTION.

The Director of Technical Education (Mr. C. H. Fenner) recently urged that something should be done to reorganise the whole system of technical education in this State. Mr. E. C. Baker (president of the Adelaide Trades and Labor Council) when seen in regard to the matter was enthusiastic in support of the suggestion. He expressed himself as in sympathy with the spirit of the idea, and was ready with proposals to put a scheme into work. Mr. Baker said:—

"May I suggest that the Government should arrange for the director to give a couple of lunch-hour addresses at Islington and other places which may suggest themselves? I would be glad to do what I could to get the Trades and Labor Council to arrange a lecture or two if the department were willing. With the introduction of the automatic machine, the 'tenner' has become part of it. The effect of doing one tiny thing, hour after hour, day after day, is to kill the development of the worker. Craftsmanship is dead; killed by the machine. Knowledge brings not only pleasure but mastery of one's life. The bottom dog must be given an opportunity to expand mentally. Formerly the mastering of a trade made a man a craftsman, and, although perhaps not able to read or write, the craftsman was an educated man by virtue of his skill.

"To make technical education go, the wholehearted sympathy of the working class must be won. Objections and prejudice against technical education have been raised in the past, owing to the fact that the technical schools turned out shoals of half-equipped operatives, who proved a menace to the interests of the men engaged in the particular industry. The operatives from these schools worked for low rates of wages, and thus aroused a justifiable feeling of hostility in the minds of the thoroughly trained worker. But by training the apprentice and turning out skilled artisans, through the medium of the workshop and the technical school, working together as the two parts of a well-adjusted scheme, the State will be the richer, the man will be happier, and a better citizen, and the organisation of industry will be promoted.

"By getting into direct contact with the men the director can break down any possible objection, and the wholehearted co-operation of the unions and the members will be secured. My society (the Amalgamated Society of Engineers) would, I am sure, be glad to help any scheme which had for its object the improvement of the journeyman, and the apprentice, and similarly with all the other trades and callings."