

INSULIN.

From T. N. STEPHENS.—The World's Work for May states that the records of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company of New York, which has an enormous business and 100,000 policies held by wage earners and persons of humble station, as well as the more prosperous groups, show that from 1919 to 1922 the death rate from diabetes went up 28 per cent. In 1923 the use of insulin was introduced on a liberal scale, with a result that a decrease has already taken place, small, certainly, only 6.4 per cent., but still a decrease instead of the previously terrible continuous increase. With a sad knowledge of good men who have succumbed to this dread disease when apparently medical aid was without avail, I was about to make enquiries as to the position regarding insulin in Australia when The Register came to my aid in its paragraph on Saturday, giving Professor Brailsford Robertson's information and recognition of the help rendered by the Abattoirs Board to enable the University to manufacture insulin during the past 18 months when it was not elsewhere available in Australia, and with such splendid results. The professor's thanks for assistance were grateful, but I think that other and wider thanks are due and will be sincerely felt by citizens who are all so justly proud of their University and its splendid staff—men of mark each in his own sphere and all quietly, unselfishly, and ceaselessly at work for the general good, and, as in this case, in no sense lagging in undertaking such work. If by their devotion and skill they have been instrumental in saving even one life who shall appraise the value of their services? As the professor tells us that the Commonwealth Laboratory is now undertaking the supply, it would be comforting to know that the professor's pioneer work is being continued in a manner in all respects satisfactory to the medical men to whom we look for combating this dire disease. Prompt action and a very generous broadcasting of results on the part of the Federal Government would, I am sure, secure the approbation of all citizens of the Commonwealth.

CONCRETE ROADS.

At Vancouver Mr. Duncan was much impressed with the concrete roads which extend in all directions from the city. Here one can travel south to Los Angeles and a few hundred miles further without leaving concrete roads, the total distance being about 2,000 miles. Fords in Vancouver, he noticed, were much in evidence, the percentage probably being greater than in any other city he had visited. There was a preponderance of closed models in Vancouver.

Giving his impressions of traffic in America, Mr. Duncan writes:—"At Saint Paul I went out in a motor bus to Minneapolis and although the traffic on the road there was about equal to King William street on a Saturday morning the bus did 30 miles per hour most of the way, the driver either having the throttle wide open or his brakes hard on. The traffic in Saint Paul is controlled by automatic signals on the street corners, an electric bell on the kerb rings just before the signal changes. This gives drivers enough warning to slow up if the signal is going to change. The scheme works quite satisfactorily."

FORD POPULARITY.

Mr. Duncan was greatly impressed by the way in which the general public in Canada regard the Ford car. They have a high opinion of it; even greater, he thinks, than in Australia. He conversed with two men in particular, both trained engineers, who were travelling for two different firms, and both used Ford coupes themselves, and looked upon them as the most useful car they could possess. Mr. Duncan believes that the closed car will eventually be used extensively in Australia.

State more flourishing Governments, sustained by public opinion, would do even more to ease the teachers' burdens and make their occupation so attractive that it would not be necessary, as it has been lately, to augment the supply by importations from abroad. The Director of Education, Mr. McCoy, has testified that in his travels in other countries he has met nowhere a more loyal, hard-working, or deserving body of public servants than are the teachers of this State. The present is a period of change and reform in educational methods, with a view to a higher standard of efficiency, and none of the new programmes, the Director is convinced, will "fail through lack of zeal and enthusiasm." Men and women of whom such things can be truly said merit the more generous recognition they are now receiving.

The business of the Conference this week will doubtless have close reference to the educational reforms the Director is introducing, and to the discussion of these topics the address to be delivered by Professor J. McKellar Stewart on "The Teacher's Equipment" and "Education For Citizenship" will form an appropriate introduction. Directly related, the two subjects cover the whole question of the true end of public education and the human machinery required for its attainment. Obviously the higher the conception formed of the purpose of education, the more necessary, if effect is to be given to it, must be completeness in the equipment of the teachers for their duties. In both directions we are fortunately able to record a gratifying advance towards the ideal system. The importance of education for the individual benefit of its recipient is not to be underrated. It is, of course, the immediate aim. But if at the same time education is not so planned as to make generally and certainly for better citizenship, morally, intellectually, industrially and in every other way, it is no business of the State at all. Its one justification is that the community as a whole, in its social, political, and economic relations should be a literate population, properly to fulfil the obligations of a democratic State in a progressive world-civilisation. But if with this object in view education is the business of the State it must be competently handled by persons thoroughly trained to get the best possible results from the raw material they deal with. Although these are truisms, their effective application in educational policy calls for the clearest understanding of ends and means, and a wise and experienced direction. The South Australian Director, as the result of his investigations in other countries, has been able to assure the people of this State that it possesses a system of education in some respects equal to the best he has seen elsewhere. It has, however, certain defects which, with the acknowledged zeal and ability of the teaching body, it will not be difficult to cure. Probably the worst vice of our system is its not unnatural tendency to drift into a somewhat mechanical and monotonous routine. Mr. McCoy is bent upon a considerable relaxation of the present rigidity of method by an attack upon the needless "restrictions and instructions and inspections" which hamper the competent teacher. The varied life and interests of the State cannot but suffer from the repression of individuality in the schools. There is too much uniformity in their output, and this the Director would fight against by conceding more discretion to the teachers and investing them with greater responsibility, in order that they, in their turn, may develop a higher degree of originality and resourcefulness in the pupils. It might not be safe in all cases at present to endow the teacher with this larger freedom to meet the different needs of the children in his care, and in the future his equipment will have to take special account of the proposed broadening of responsibility. But it is a tribute to the general efficiency of the teachers, as well as the deep interest they take in their work, that already it is quite practicable to initiate this vital reform on a fairly substantial scale.

There are other problems of education which our teachers have been studying for years, and on which the researches of the Director, among others, have thrown new and valuable light. The difficulty of effectively managing the large classes is one of the most serious, especially if there is to be a general break-away from a deadening routine of uniformity. There is, moreover, still to be solved the perennial question of adequately pro-

viding for the education of boys and girls after the completion of the primary course. Other countries, notably Sweden and Scotland, have got to work in earnest on this problem, and apparently are solving it. With us, as Mr. McCoy has pointed out, the need of new arrangements for industrial and other training in the period during which so many of our youth, attracted by the prospect of good wages for their age, now enter upon "blind alley" occupations, is urgent and imperative if the State is to hold its own under the universal conditions of intense economic rivalry. Educational reform is, of course, largely a matter of finance. The State revenue is not so ample as to permit of the expansion of our school system to the extent which may reasonably be desired. Both the late Government and the present have, however, displayed a keen sympathy with proposals for educational advance, and the Minister now in office may be trusted to strain every effort to enable his department to carry out its large and enlightened programme.

THE NEWS
SATURDAY, JUNE 28, 1924.

WHEAT PRICES

(By T. S. Opie, Dip. Ec.)

During the war monetary inflation and an abnormal demand raised wheat prices to a height even satisfactory to farmers. Such a state of affairs was highly desirable, for the prosperity of Australia depends, ultimately, upon the prosperity of primary production. But wheat prices are like music—when high-pitched they cause excitement and optimism; when low, dejection and pessimism.

No doubt the price of wheat has great influence, and the person who could alter it at will would be in possession of power greater than that which could be conferred by the "philosopher's stone." But the price of wheat is fixed in the world market and cannot be controlled by individuals or their association. "Lift not thy hands to it for help."

Purchasing Power

Though the price of wheat rose considerably during the war, the cost of living rose also. In the following table wheat prices in South Australia have been corrected by applying the price index number which gives the actual purchasing power received by the farmer for a bushel of wheat over a period of years:—

Year.	Market Price.	Actual Price.
1901	2/10	3/2½
1906	3/2	3/6
1911	3/4½	3/4½
1914	4/1½	3/7½
1915	6/9½	5/4½
1916	4/0	3/8 1-3
1917	4/0	3/9½
1918	4/0	3/6½
1919	5/6	3/9
1920	9/	5/1½
1921	8/	4/10
1922	5/0½	3/2 2-5

Evidently the farmer had nothing to complain of from the standpoint of the cost of living except in 1922 and after, but as the costs of production rose relatively higher than wheat prices during the years 1916-1919, the farmer did not enjoy such an abnormally prosperous period as the mere market prices suggest.

Holding Wheat

It is probable that since 1914 the wheat growers of the world tended to put too much trust in the price of wheat. The decline in prices which occurred after the armistice disturbed this complacent state of mind and forced a review of the situation and its problems.

Wheat is harvested in a relatively short time, but is consumed over the whole year. Hence one proposed solution to the problem is that instead of the farmers selling the bulk of their

The Advertiser

ADELAIDE, MONDAY, JUNE 20, 1924.

A CONGRESS OF TEACHERS.

The annual Conference of the Public School Teachers' Union, of which the twenty-ninth will be opened to-day, is always a gathering of very much more than purely professional or class interest. It is an event of general importance, which for many reasons claims the attention of the whole community, whose welfare is closely concerned in the progress of national education. The teachers themselves have given to the Conference this extended interest, because they take far too high and too broad a view of their responsibilities to be content with meeting merely for the purpose of formulating their own claims as public officials, ventilating grievances, or discussing technical questions of limited significance. By those who recognise the tremendous part played by the instructors of youth in shaping the life of the community it is often said that the teacher's calling is more than a profession, more even than a vocation—it is a noble ministry of service. No teacher who has obeyed the call of the spirit to his special work, and who loves it, deserves to be thought of as a hireling intent only upon the material gains he derives from his occupation. But the class to which he belongs has certainly had some reason to complain in the past that the public for whose benefit it labors so conscientiously and zealously have been apt to make the teacher's disinterestedness an excuse for shabby treatment, and to allow the virtue of a high-minded profession to be its own, or its principal, reward. Happily that is a condition of things which is rapidly passing. As the communal sense of the value of education develops, it is seen more clearly that the devoted men and women who give their lives to the work merit a decent measure of support from the State, and must not, by the inadequacy of their means, be harassed with sordid cares in the performance of their responsible and exacting duties. Of late years the status of the teaching profession, practically as well as theoretically, has risen to a point much more nearly in agreement with the large and growing claims that are made upon it. Salaries, if in some cases still inadequate, have been placed upon a basis of greater liberality, and very the finances of the

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MOTORIST ABROAD

IMPRESSIONS OF AMERICA

Schoolboy Car Owners

Mr. Keith S. Duncan, B.E., Dip. Mech. Eng., who left Adelaide on April 6 for Canada, has completed the first stage of his trip, and has arrived in Canada. In a letter to his father (Mr. James N. Duncan, chairman of directors of Duncan Motors Limited) he gives interesting details concerning his trip, in which he says that in Honolulu they were excavating for the foundations of a building in one of the city blocks. It was not a big job, but the most interesting part was that they were using a gasoline (steam type) shovel and a fleet of 5-ton motor lorries, with dump-wagon bodies. The power shovel took about four scoops to fill the lorry, and as soon as one lorry was full another would back in under the shovel. The work proceeded rapidly, although there were only three or four men working. They did not knock off at 5 p.m., but were still working up to 10.30 p.m.



MR. KEITH DUNCAN, B.E.

Mr. Duncan also visited several school and college grounds in Honolulu. At the colleges and high schools he noticed fleets of cars with Ford coupes and sedans in great prominence. If the boys went from the building to another they would crowd the car and drive over.