

*Advertiser July 15<sup>th</sup> 1886*

STATE SCHOOL PUPILS AND UNIVERSITY EXAMINATIONS.

Mr. BAGSTER moved—

“That a return be laid upon the table of this House showing—1. The number of State school pupils which have passed the University examinations (primary, junior, and matriculation), giving the names of schools in each year from which they went, and distinguishing boys and girls. 2. Showing the number of boys that won University scholarships of £50 per annum each year since the scholarships were first given, with a statement of the reasons why scholarships were not awarded at the examinations of same years, the years to be specified. 3. The number of pupils which passed the above-named examinations from the Advanced School for Girls, stating those which were second passes of the same pupil at the primary, junior, or matriculation examinations. 4. The number of girls holding bursaries or exhibitions which have entered the Advanced School for Girls in each year since its establishment, and how many of them passed University examinations. 5. Showing how many pupils have gone from the Advanced School for Girls qualified to enter upon the arts course in the University. If none so qualified why have they not been so. 6. How many girls from the Advanced School have become pupil or assistant teachers in the State schools.”

He thought the information would be a guide for future action. The first paragraph of the return would probably show that in 1878 certain pupils passed from the Grote-street and other schools and had not continued to do so. It became a matter of necessity to see why they were not so successful as in the past. As to University scholarships he thought the return would show probably that even a £50 scholarship did not bring out many competitors. He believed in 1880 none passed, and in 1878 one boy passed. In the first three years only some five or six passed the examination for the Advanced School for Girls, although there were fully 100 to bring up for examination. As to the fourth paragraph, he would remind the House that in 1879 Mr. King, who was then Minister of Education, pointed out that while we had such excellent education institutions as St. Peter's and Prince Alfred Colleges, we had nothing of a like character for girls in South Australia. He was not going to enter into an argument as to whether we should or should not have educational establishments such as the advanced school subsidised by the Government coming into competition with private schools, but he wished to know what the success of the advanced school had been so far. Inspector Dewhirst in the educational report for this year had pointed out the large percentage in the Training School of female teachers in proportion to male teachers. It was something like 79 per cent. He thought the House would agree that the information sought for in his motion would prove to be very useful.

Carried.



Register July 15<sup>th</sup> 1886

## MR. BAGSTER ON EDUCATION.

Mr. Bagster, who not long ago frankly confessed to a laudable ambition to become a Minister of the Crown, has given a further indication of his "wish to soar" to the heights of chief of the Education Department. He has called for an elaborate return of an educational character, with the evident design of allaying his thirst for the information requisite to qualify him for this exalted position. And, first, he wants to know "the number of State school pupils which have passed the University examinations (primary, junior, and matriculation), giving the names of schools in each year from which they went, and distinguishing boys and girls." This, to use the vernacular, is a "large order." Very few pupils go direct from the State schools to the University. The boys and girls who are of superior quality, intellectually speaking, to their fellows gain exhibitions and bursaries, which enable them to pursue their studies at secondary schools. Thus, if Mr. Bagster wants to know the names of the schools from which the successful State-school children went up for examination at the University, he will find that St. Peter's College and Prince Alfred College recur with wonderful regularity. There is not an instance on record, so far as our memory serves us, of a boy or girl going direct from a primary State school to a matriculation examination. The State in its anxiety to forward general education has seen to it that the advantages of primary education are placed well within the reach of all. It has gone further and made provision for the advancement of promising pupils. But it in no case endeavours to make the education imparted by the State of so particular a character as that pupils may proceed at once from the primary schools to the University.



The return moved for by Mr. Bagster is also to show "the number of boys that won University scholarships of £50 per annum each year since the scholarships were first given, with a statement of the reason why scholarships were not awarded at the examinations of same years, the years to be specified." Now Mr. Bagster might easily have found out by referring to the University Calendar that twenty-three awards have been made to the scholarships of which he speaks. He might reasonably have been expected to understand that the full number of scholarships was not awarded in certain years because the candidates were not qualified. But he is quite mistaken if he supposes that the failure of the candidates to comply with the conditions in any way reflects upon the State schools. In no single case since 1876 has the scholarship been awarded to a person who has not passed through a secondary school. The State schools send up their exhibitioners, and it rests with the secondary schools to improve their knowledge and to make them fit for the reception of higher teaching. There is more reason for the inclusion in this return of the third particular, which demands a return of "the number of pupils which passed the above-mentioned examinations from the Advanced School for Girls, stating those which were second passes of the same pupil at the primary, junior, or matriculation examinations." We have all along maintained that the establishment by the State of this Advanced School for Girls was under the circumstances an unwarrantable interference with private enterprise. It is evident, too, that the institution has kept a higher place than it is really entitled to in the record of pupils who have passed the junior or matriculation examination on the ground that several of its pupils after passing one year present themselves the next in order to get a higher place. This is a pernicious system, and it is greatly to be regretted that it should have received encouragement. If Mr.



Bagster's comprehensive return induces a discussion condemnatory of it he will not have exercised himself in vain. It is further required that the return should show "the number of girls holding bursaries or exhibitions which have entered the Advanced School for Girls in each year since its establishment, and how many of them passed University examinations." It would have been easy to find out the answer to the first part of this question by a reference to the annual reports of the Minister of Education. From these we find that the school was opened in October, 1879, and that there were instructed in 1880 three holders of bursaries, in 1881 ten, in 1882 and in 1883 eleven for each year, in 1884 and last year seven each. What is the good of putting the country to the expense of preparing a return which five minutes' work on Mr. Bagster's part would have rendered unnecessary? And with regard to the second part of this particular clause it is hard to see where the bearing lies. To pass University examinations may be a desirable thing for the winners of bursaries, but it must be remembered that the object in proposing the prizes was nothing further than that promising pupils should have the opportunity of gaining higher knowledge.