

A UNIVERSITY RENAISSANCE.

RAPID STRIDES IN ENGLAND.

COMPARISONS WITH ADELAIDE.

Professor R. P. Newton, M.A., D.Lit., D.Sc., Rhodes Professor of Imperial History in the University of London, who, in consequence of the pressure of work during the war was given a year's leave of absence and is touring the world, is in Adelaide. He is a Travelling Commissioner of the Royal Colonial Institute. Yesterday Professor Newton addressed the professorial and lecturing staff of the University on the subject of the expansion of civic universities in England during and since the war and the movement which has woven the universities more into the life of the community. The discussion which followed his address did a good deal to bring forward the wants of the University of Adelaide and to compare the treatment of that institution by the Government and the public with the manner in which the English universities are now supported.

Professor Newton was introduced by the Vice-Chancellor (Professor Mitchell), who said he believed this was the sixty-sixth university that Professor Newton had visited during his tour.

The visitor said never before had there been such a university renaissance as had taken place in the world's metropolis in the last six or seven years. There had been a considerable accession of funds, and the influence of the university upon the population had been greater than ever before. Among the duties of the civic university, he said, the university should make available to the community the knowledge of its staff on the subjects of the day in order to inform public opinion so that people might be able to judge rightly the questions that were before them. In London and also in Manchester a great deal of valuable research had been going on, but it had not previously been made available to the general public. He explained how the gaps in the London University had been filled up. During the war Great Britain had shown signs of losing her commercial supremacy to Japan and the United States, and the leaders of commerce and industry realised that something should be done to arrest that process and ensure that Great Britain should win back her leading place. Therefore the commercial community came to the university, and said, "We want men to be recruits for the highest branches of our business," and the universities entered upon a great scheme of commercial education on the highest lines. The captains of industry had decided that they must have scientific men on their staffs, and that these men must come from the university, and they had liberally donated large sums of money in order that there might be established within the universities departments of research connected with trade. British industries were now fully awake, and the universities were doing as much comparatively as the institutions in the United States, and would probably do more. The University of London and its colleges had raised within the last six or seven years 3½ million sterling. It had not spent the money on buildings, but in libraries and endowments, which would make the work permanent in future. The same sort of thing was going on in Manchester, Leeds, Birmingham, and other places. The Treasury grant to the universities had been multiplied by five, although the British Exchequer was watching every penny that went out. The cities also assisted. For instance, a little place like Nottingham levied a 3d. rate for the support of its university college, and Manchester had a 2½d. rate for the support of its university. Manchester was conducting a "drive" for subscriptions, and speeches were delivered daily from a platform in front of the town hall. Some people might say it was undignified, but there were new ideas of dignity in England to-day.

The visitor extolled the University extension lectures in Adelaide, and said the London University had done likewise, though it did not know such an excellent example had been set in Adelaide. In London they were lecturing to 10,000 people a week on leading subjects of the day, and the same kind of thing was being done in each civic university in Great Britain. In this way the University had established its claim to be the definite centre round which the life and learning of the community revolved.

Professor Newton laid stress on the way the University was being supported by the Government, municipal, and public bodies, the great banks, and such organisations as the China Association, the Navy League, and the Russian Chamber of Commerce.

Mr. Talbot Smith enquired whether the professor could give some idea of a propaganda to convert the Government, municipalities, and the public in South Australia, and Professor Newton said support was being accorded to the university in England despite that England was hard up. At present the taxation there was £15 10/ per head for every man, woman, and child, whereas, he understood, the average in Australia was £6 3/ per head. "England is harder up than you," he added, "but whatever other votes must be cut down there education must go up. It seems to me to be necessary for you to have a drive as Manchester is doing. It would help Adelaide, and enable you to endow some of the chairs, without which I cannot understand a university existing."

The Vice-Chancellor said they considered that the State had a duty to perform regarding education, and unless the education system was well developed at the top it would be poor all the way down. If

they made a "drive" he thought it should be a political drive. They should enlighten the public regarding the amount being spent in England and the United States, in fact, everywhere. The existing Act in this State provided for a Government grant on endowments for research of 5 per cent, up to £10,000, and as they had reached £9,000 they asked that the limit should be increased to £20,000. All other States charged themselves with the provision of University buildings, and the Government of this State should accept the responsibility of maintaining all professional schools. The University should seek endowment for all professional research—all matters outside the bare necessities which it claimed from the Government. The Government should continue the grant of 5 per cent, on endowments and should put up all buildings.

In reply to Mr. Talbot Smith regarding the attitude of the Labor Party towards education in England, Professor Newton said the best policy in regard to education there had been produced by the Labor Party. In the old country scholarships were provided without limit, which would enable any boy, if he was worthy, to get to the very top of the ladder—indeed, it was not a ladder, but an inclined plane, which had been built up during the last 30 years. Most of the people in high places in England had benefited by the scholarships. The Prime Minister, for instance, had, as a child, lost his father, and had been brought up by an uncle, who was a cobbler. The Lord Chancellor was the son of an accountant.

At the instance of the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Newton was heartily thanked. The visitor will join the R.M.S. Indarra to-day en route for London.

Adv 8-4-20

NEW ERA FOR TEACHERS

ADDRESS BY THE DIRECTOR.

SCHOLARSHIP ESSENTIAL.

In an address at the opening of the conference of the South Australian Public Teachers' Union in the Price Memorial Hall, Adelaide High School, on Wednesday evening, the Director of Education (Mr. W. T. McCoy, B.A.) outlined a new policy in regard to education involving many changes. The president (Mr. R. Sutton) occupied the chair, and the large hall was filled with teachers.

Mr. McCoy, who delivered his first speech to the teachers in his capacity as Director, said he had had the pleasure of meeting them in 1916, but their faces were brighter on this occasion than at the previous meeting. He attributed the smiles at this gathering to the prompt action of the Government in granting an increase of salaries. He addressed the gathering on "The Training of Teachers," and said he understood that the various teachers' associations of South Australia existed not only for the purpose of promoting the interests and the welfare of teachers generally, but for the consideration of educational problems, for the discussion of modern educational theory and practice, and for the advancement of education generally. Those objects had the sympathy and support of the department. He was pleased to hear of the means adopted by members of the associations to keep abreast of the times, to improve their efficiency, and to further the cause of education. The self-satisfied teacher some-

times reined on his long experience or on his popularity as a sufficiently effective protection against criticism. Long experience sometimes meant long stagnation. The functions of a teacher were those of a guide, a helper, a director. It was his duty to mould the character of the child, to train him in right habits of thought, speech, and conduct; to facilitate normal learning processes, and to help him to meet the needs of life by carefully guiding and directing his activities—to make him an intelligent and efficient citizen. If these were the functions of a teacher then he would need adequate scholarship, an acquaintance with the growth and development of the child-mind, a knowledge of methodology, and some skill in applying the methods to enable him to carry out his functions properly. To obtain the qualifications he must undergo a course of training before entering on the practice of his profession, as did the architect, the doctor, the lawyer, the clergyman. They must not wait for him to acquire those qualifications at the expense of the child through long years of experience.

New Scheme of Training.

Adequate scholarship was an essential. A child's knowledge of arithmetic, English, geography, history, &c., was not a sufficient equipment for one who desired to teach those subjects. The teacher was paid for his knowledge of the subjects, and he should know them well. There was a disposition in some quarters to underestimate the value of scholarship, and to over-estimate the qualifications of personality and method. A good teacher, a good architect, a good doctor, a good lawyer needed both scholarship and good, practical skill to apply his knowledge. Some knowledge of the growth and development of the child-mind was a second essential. As the physician was trained in practical work by attending clinics where he could see experts at work, so the teacher must be trained in a well-staffed practice school, where he could square practice with theory, see good models in teaching, take part in criticism lessons, and obtain the necessary practice himself under the expert guidance of a master or a mistress of method, or a skilled demonstration teacher. It was essential that there should be close collaboration between the college and the practice school, so that the practice applied in the one should agree with the pedagogy taught in the other. The departments of theory and practice should co-operate if the work was to be effective, and for that reason separate practice schools should be established and staffed by teachers who, because of their theoretical knowledge and their practical skill, were competent to carry out those objects. The new scheme, which had been recently approved by the Minister, provided for a training such as he had indicated. It was fundamentally different from the existing scheme inasmuch as the candidate would be required to complete his ordinary education before entering on the professional course, and, like the doctor and the lawyer, the architect, and the clergyman he would complete the professional course before he was permitted to teach. Suitable arrangements would be made to weed out the unfit.

New Training College.

In order to obtain uniformity of educational aim and effort, all of the various courses (there were at present five or six) would be brought under the control of one person—a leader of strong individuality, sound education, and good organising power and capable of inspiring students with lofty ideals and a true sense of the importance of their work to the community. The erection of a Training College and the establishment of two or more practice schools were now being considered. The college would provide six courses of training. First, the short course, to supply the professional training required for the less important positions in the primary schools. The minimum qualifications for entrance would be a pass at the Junior Public examination. The length of the course would be 12 months, and on its satisfactory completion the student would rank as an uncertificated teacher. The normal course for primary teachers would be the two-year course. Its purpose would be to supply the academic and professional training required for the more important positions in the primary schools. The minimum qualifications for entrance to that course would be a pass at the Senior Public examination in six subjects, of which English, arithmetic and algebra, and a foreign language must form three. On the satisfactory completion of the course students would be awarded a IIB certificate. High School teachers would be chosen from the best of the two-year students, and they would be given an additional year or two at the University. Candidates for training as infant teachers or domestic arts teachers would undergo a two years' course, the qualifications for admission being an education up to the Senior Public standard. Woodwork and technical teachers would be specially chosen on account of their aptitude for the work. In all courses the minimum

age of admission would be 17 years, and the pay probably £60 for men and £50 for women in the first year, £70 and £60 in the second year, £80 and £70 in the third year, and £90 and £80 in the fourth year, together with a boarding allowance of £20 per annum where it was necessary for the student to live away from home in order to attend the Training College.

The present pay was £40, plus a boarding allowance of £30 where necessary.

Abolition of the Junior Teacher.

With a view to ensuring a steady supply of students for the Training College, a number of studentships of the annual value of £30 and tenable for from one to two years at the nearest high school, would be offered for competition amongst children of 15 years of age or more who have passed the Junior Public examination. An additional £20 per annum would be paid to those who must live away from home in order to attend the High School. Candidates other than those who won studentships would be admitted to the college, provided they could comply with the qualifications for admission. Mentors might come into the scheme at any time by passing the Junior Public examination, but in order to keep faith with those who were appointed in January last a special entrance examination under the old conditions would be held in November next. These proposals meant the abolition of the junior teacher as a teaching force. During the period that must elapse before they could be brought into full operation some adjustment would be necessary, and it might be expedient to continue portions of the existing scheme for a year or two. It was anticipated that the new regulations governing the training of teachers will be published within a few weeks.

A New Curriculum.

It was as necessary to teach right habits of speech as to teach children to recognise words in the reader. Promptness, neatness, accuracy, patience, persistence, a due regard for the rights of others, self-reliance should be inculcated, whether they were prescribed in the curriculum or not. Ideals such as religious toleration and freedom of thought; sentiments of reverence for age, of sympathy for the needy and suffering, and of patriotism were as important as the facts of arithmetic. They needed to read into the curriculum all those habits, ideas, virtues, and sentiments, the practice of which would make the boys and girls better men and women. There were those who had endeavored to measure success or failure solely by the percentages gained by children at the annual examination. Such a conception of the work was wrong, and unfair to the children and to the teachers. The teaching of the three "R's" was very important, and it was a fine thing for the children to meet the tests of the teaching satisfactorily, but there were other things more important. He was aware that he was preaching a doctrine that would appear fantastic, and even revolutionary, to some—especially the younger and the untrained teachers. But before they passed a premature judgment he would like them to be quite sure that they realised the real aim of education, and their real duties as teachers. With regard to the actual content of the new curriculum that was to be issued towards the close of the present year, he could not promise that there would be many fundamental alterations. Reading, writing, arithmetic, geography, history, and the other subjects would appear as of yore, though the standard in some of the subjects would be raised, and the primary grades would be reduced from eight to seven. The question of giving a vocational bias to the instruction after the child had completed the primary grades was receiving serious consideration. The question of vocational training prompted one to ask were they on the right educational track? Or were they practically doing in the schools what was done in the schools of their fathers? Was the education at present given to our boys and girls of, say, 12 years of age and upwards, a fitting preparation for their future life's work? Were the girls, for instance, being taught to cook, to sew, to launder, to keep house, &c.? And the boys (exclusive of those who desired to take up a profession): was their education being orientated towards their future needs in the commercial world, in the industrial world, and, above all, in the farming world? This was essentially an agricultural community. The future of the State must clearly depend upon the development of its agricultural industries—farming, viticulture, fruit culture, dairying, wool-growing, &c., rather than on the development of its manufactures. What were they doing to meet the needs of those boys and girls between the ages of 12 and 15 who would enter into the agricultural, or commercial, or industrial, or domestic ranks?