

Health and Citizenship Discussed.

The annual conference of the Education Society was resumed at the Institute Hall, North terrace, on Thursday afternoon. Dr. Helen Mayo occupied the chair.

The subject was "Health and citizenship." The Chairman said people must be sufficiently interested in their own health to exercise self-control. Children must be taught, for example, to take a bath every day and to eat at regular times. They wanted children to be interested in those points in such a way that they would do them automatically. When a stimulus was brought the result followed naturally. An unfortunate influence, due to anxiety in parents, was that children were inclined to become afraid that things would happen to them. Girls and women were afraid of being thought frightened, and were proud that they would not give way. They should be sufficiently self-conscious not to hand trouble on to other people, especially in the way of infectious disease. Health could also be safeguarded by the care of others in traffic, and laws of health should be so framed that everybody would have opportunity of observing them.

Teacher a Powerful Force.

Dr. F. S. Hone, in a paper covering many interesting and illuminating phases of the question, mentioned three stages in the relation of education to the health of children—(1) The period when the health of the child might be said to have been disregarded; (2) the stage of defence against an unexpected menace to health that arose from the multiplication of schools; and (3) the stage long entered upon, when they came to a recognition of the relationship by the educational authorities, to the communal health and citizenship, of the school as a weapon to wield for the advancement of the standard of public health, and the school child as a future citizen to be trained in habits of personal hygiene and in the community spirit which was the basis of all national health and true citizenship. In taking that position the educationist was in line with all modern thinkers on public health. The teacher was one of the most powerful forces for training future citizens to a true attitude on national health. For that reason certain ardent health reformers advocated teaching hygiene to older scholars, sex hygiene instruction to adolescents in schools, and similar specific health lessons. The increasing insistence on open-air classes, the inculcation from earliest years of habits of personal cleanliness in the school, unconsciously created habits that lessened the child's exposure to infection in later life. It was not merely the child's body which went to school, but both his mind and body. The highest health of an individual was an attitude of mind, not observant of one's own body, but unconscious of it, almost automatically living in obedience to laws of personal health in which one had been trained, and with the mind free to observe the ills of others, and the energy free to work to prevent those ills. In his travels through Australia last year with the Health Commission, he had been struck with the way in which the officers of State education departments entrusted with primary education were seeking to carry out the ideals of which he had spoken. With regard to their own State, he emphasized that in lessons in cookery, economical buying of suitable foods, and other subjects of domestic economy, the housewives of the future were being trained in a most important factor in the building up of a virile and healthy race. The ideal set up by doctors, dentists, and nurses was the examination of every child at least thrice during his school life, which pointed the way to means for correcting departures from the normal. The psychologist, in determining the mental calibre of the children, was laying the foundation for training appropriate to their abilities. In New South Wales it had been proved that once dental defects had been pointed out by medical inspection, children in country districts did not wait for the visit of the school dentist, but had their teeth attended to privately. A special examination of children in goitre districts had been made, with appropriate remedial and preventive treatment. In northern New South Wales the school medical staff had undertaken detection of children infected with hookworm. In Sydney and Adelaide work had been done in feeding a number of children with an extra pint of milk a day, which had brought about a steady increase of weight, and a definite increase in mental alertness. Such practical evidence of the value of additional milk must have far-reaching effects. He regretted that in the universities they found little or no signs of interest in these matters. Their responsibility was for the training of the whole man in his intellectual, physical, and social activities. Should they be content with less than complete medical examinations of all

students as they entered the University and at intervals throughout their course? That would involve at each university a properly organized department of personal and public hygiene.

Give Children Ideals.

Mrs. T. G. Osborn, M.Sc., emphasized the need for all-round development for the immediate and future life of the child. In the early years rapid growth meant a brisk blood-stream, and that required movement. The more that was developed the more normal the child became. The child formed its ideals largely through play, which led by degrees to mental work. As a set-off to sedentary life, gymnastics and organized games were part of the course in all schools. Ideals, such as courage and patience, were developed in practical way by sports teachers. The Greeks had stood as a model to other nations, in that they learned the relation between the physical and mental in main; but a class of men had arisen who made gymnastics their livelihood, with the result that the number of people who took part in the games became fewer, because they could not compete with professionals. Greek sculpture and art showed what effect the physical had upon the mental qualities of their people. Although Australia had unrivalled facilities for physical exercise, they still had to regard physical education from the moral and intellectual standpoint, because they did not appear to take to that education seriously enough as compared with some other countries, probably because of their natural advantages. In America one effect of physical education was evident, as the people walked erect and did not slouch along as she had seen many in Australia. In Sweden every person who desired to become a school teacher, had to pass a definite test to show fitness to teach physical education along with other subjects. They should know how to correct defects in carriage and posture. The simple beauty of the folk dances made special appeal to children, but they had few specialized teachers in Australia. In Boy Scout and Girl Guide movements, the training in citizenship was the underlying idea. In the hands of competent persons physical training meant more than mere bodily development. It tended to create happiness and success for the child. Both speakers were heartily thanked.

"VOCATION AND CITIZENSHIP."

CHOICE OF A CALLING.

At the evening session, Professor Chapman and Mr. A. E. Clarkson spoke to a large audience on "Vocation and Citizenship." Professor Rennie occupied the chair. He apologized for the Minister of Education's inability to be present, and assured them of Mr. Hill's sympathy with the teachers. Referring to his own early experience as a teacher, and his sympathy with the profession, the Chairman said that, although there were great difficulties in those far-off days, he was conservative enough to think there were also advantages and that the modern system might not be an entire improvement. They had then no examinations to look forward to, and no prizes; but, on the other hand, such a subject as the one they were to consider that night, was not taught.

School Teachers' Part.

Professor Chapman said the increasing complexity of the social organism was a characteristic of the age. Invention and scientific discovery were striding at an accelerating rate, and almost every notable invention required a new race of specialists, and added new trades to the ever-increasing list. It was but 25 years since the first motor car came to Australia, for instance, and now many boys wanted to be motor mechanics, and a whole series of specialized trades had been created to supply the needs of the new business. It had been estimated that in the complex society of to-day there were 10,000 different callings at which a man might earn a living. There was another feature of present society that was producing changes as fundamental and important as scientific invention. The power of democracy was a rising flood that they could not stem, even if they would; and the problem of the age was to control it that it should carry them to greater progress, to a higher standard of welfare, and not sweep them into the valley of desolation. That was the greatest of all problems, and its successful solution depended largely on the work of the schoolmaster. It was of first importance to the individual to choose wisely regarding vocation, but of what interest was it to the State? If there was such an interest, that provided one relation between vocation and citizenship. A community to be prosperous must be like a well-oiled machine, which friction would reduce to a minimum. In the ideal community every man would be engaged in work for which he was well fitted. Contentment was the lubricating oil of the State machine, and it was only work that he liked that a man could give out the best that was in him. Unfortunately when a boy left school and had to choose one of the many vocations he was the rule rather than the exception, particular direction, and he naturally sought for advice from his parents and from his school master.

Technical Education.

Vocational guidance was perhaps,

take its place as a necessary and recognized part of every education system, but it was full of difficulties. In the best interests of the community the number of boys going into any occupation should be reasonably proportionate to the needs of the industry. Reliable and definite information regarding the possibilities ahead of him and what additional educational training (if any) he ought to get, could be comparatively easily gathered, and should be available at every school. That would describe the nature of the training necessary for the principal vocations, what that training would cost, how long it took, what remuneration was offered, and what were the opportunities for advancement; the different sorts of jobs associated with the calling, their effect upon health, who and where were the chief employers, whether the field was overcrowded, and how to set about getting such employment. If such information, adapted to the needs of the State, were available it might save some of the wasted effort that resulted through boys entering vocations with wrong notions of their possibilities, or with ambitions to reach a goal impossible of attainment without more educational equipment. The waste through young people floundering in work for which they were ill adapted was great, and efforts to reduce it were well worth while. As one help it was desirable to bring about closer co-operation between employers and educational institutions. To that end they had recently started an employment bureau at the Adelaide University, which promised to be extremely useful and in some places the idea had been applied to colleges and schools. A school should be able to fill the demands of an employer seeking young workers much more intelligently than other agencies. In technical and vocational training they had made in South Australia considerable advance. Central schools gave opportunities to those who had reached the leaving standard of the primary schools to obtain further education helpful to those intending to enter upon industrial or commercial life, and the technical subjects taught gave them also opportunity of finding something of their own tastes and special abilities before they actually chose their vocations. The growth of the plans for the compulsory technical education of apprentices had necessitated new schools for the purpose, and more trades were being brought under the scheme. The Adelaide School of Mines and Industries and the University provided more advanced technical teaching. All that was a hopeful augury, but there were two points he wished to make.

Apprentices and Improvers.

In most trades there were more workers under 21 unapprenticed than were serving under articles. Some were probably not learning the trade at all, but the majority were picking it up as best they could, with no systematic instruction, and were known as "improvers." The improver was a free lance, who could go from one shop to another, and the employer was under no obligation to teach him the trade. Thus both to the employer and the employer the way of the improver was made attractive. On the other hand, the apprentice came under the scope of the Act for the Compulsory Training of Apprentices, and had to give up an evening a week for three years to attendance at special classes at a technical school; and the employer had to allow him one afternoon a week off for the same purpose. But in most trades at present only a minority of those learning the trade came within the scope of the measure was to ensure that young men learning a trade should become competent tradesmen, and should have a shop and technical training in accord with modern requirements. The simplest course seemed to be to wipe out the improver altogether. Legislation to that end was contemplated, and he hoped it would soon be an accomplished fact. His second point was that if a boy left school at 14, with a primary school education only, and then became apprenticed in an engineering shop, he had little chance of rising beyond the position of foreman; but if he could attend a junior technical school for two more years, and lay a foundation of mathematics and science, there was no limit to his progress in the engineering world with talent and industry. That extra two years of schooling supplied an argument for the proposal to raise the compulsory school-going age, and for the existence of the central and junior technical schools.

Mechanization and Organization.

Mr. Clarkson said he thought of vocational training, broadly, as the preparator of the man for his job; and of citizenship as dutiful membership of the community. The first thing that struck them was the universal tendency to greater and still greater mechanization, and larger and still larger units of organization. Whether they liked it or no that process would go on. The development had reached furthest in the domain of secondary industry, and some prophesied changes in rural life that would be no less profound. Many saw in that organization, which went with it, nothing but a deadening of the individual to an automaton, cramped his faculties, deadened his soul, and robbed him of all joy in his work. He did not think that was true. The case against the mechanized system of organizations was greatly over-stressed. Not enough was allowed for the machine's benevolent

function in lightening labour. There would still be monotony and fatigue in much of everyday work, even when they had reached the industrial paradise pictured by the idealists. Many jobs could not be called vocational; they were the blind-alley occupations, involving no skill, and offering little variety or promotion. One factor which militated strongly against youths entering into apprenticeship in the skilled trades was the fatal lure of high wages readily available as unskilled labourers. In many cases poor parents found it difficult to apprentice their boys to trades and professions when apprenticeship meant a minimum of pay for a maximum of effort; and frequently they were through financial stringency, compelled to put their boys into positions which brought the greatest immediate financial return. The business houses of Adelaide were besieged with young fellows, who were living monuments of the need of specialization in vocational guidance.

Call for Skilled Workmen.

Choosing a life-work was a study rather than a decision, and it was necessary to start early with the boy. Teachers should be encouraged to organize group visits to factories and business activities. In behalf of employers, he assured them that such visits would be welcomed, and the most complete information and instruction given. Now that daylight lanterns were in vogue, much more use should be made in the schools of lantern slides depicting industries and methods of production. A pleasing feature of business life to-day was the growing respect for the mechanic. The very structure of modern industry called for not fewer, but relatively more skilled workmen. Mass production was the dominant tendency, and catered only for the universal need, for the things which were called for by the thousand, or the million. The mass production of those things released energy for the production of those other things which appealed to the discriminating individual, and the demand for which increased with the community's growth in well-being and general culture. Looking broadly upon the field of industry, there were in demand two kinds of job—namely, the job which was skilled, or semi-skilled, and the job which was little skilled, or not skilled at all. The problem of developing definite skill in every direction in which it was needed was well understood. Attention to the technical and semi-technical minority, did not carry them more than part of the way. The great majority whose efforts in gaining a living implied the exercise of a lesser grade of definite skill, or even of no appreciable skill at all, beyond dexterity of hand and alertness of eye, determined industrial politics, and ultimately determined the character of citizenship. He was always interested in schemes for the enhancement of the technical efficiency of the minority which could get its education partly in school and partly in workshop; but he was more interested in the great majority and in the ways in which it could be prepared for its job in a community increasing in the organization which went with increasing mechanization. The great majority were not much concerned, either with technical schools or systems of apprenticeship. What they must learn of their job they learned on the job, and so far as one could see at present, there was no other way in which they could learn. Greater skill, greater technical efficiency, was tremendously wanted in Australia, as in every country. The outstanding problem was not enhancement of skill, but an increase in willing service. In relation to the mass of the community, the most effective training for vocation was that which would make the individual realize that, as a community, they were members one of another, and that the best effort one was capable of, was not only the sure way to ultimate individual reward, but was a definite obligation to the community. Let them ask any employer to-day to say wherein his staff troubles chiefly lay; and for every instance in which he would speak of defective skill or insufficient alertness, or dexterity, in nine cases he would cite defective sense of duty—in a word, defective morality. The army of wage-earners had become so accustomed to emphasizing "rights," that they sometimes forgot that there must also be obligations. He was speaking broadly, for there were many employes who possessed a high sense of duty. How that seepage through the industrial dam would be stopped educationists, of all people, should seriously consider. In America he had been impressed with the growth of the community idea. Competing manufacturers met at frequent intervals to pool ideas, processes, and so on. That spirit had largely eliminated suspicion and unfair methods of trading, and had tended to the elevation of trade and public service of commerce. As my audience comprised mostly of those engaged in instructing the young minds, he asked them to permit him to conclude with a few observations from a very busy life. They should inculcate in the youthful mind sincere respect for citizenship and service. Not how to become rich was the lesson, but what to do with wealth, and how to use it as custodians. Accountability was a great watchword, and service should be the dominant note.