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for a year or two to the study of the various subjects in which they must be proficient in order to be promoted to the positions of assistants or head teachers. This is to be regretted, because the absence of distractions and the stimulus due to comradeship would ensure a better and wider education than would be possible under the bad plan of mixing study and teaching. "One thing at a time" is a good rule in this matter, as in most others. It is becoming increasingly difficult to induce young men of the right kind to take up the profession of teaching. The Board of Inspectors in their last report showed that, unless something is done to increase the attractiveness of the profession, the present decrease of the proportion of male to female teachers must go on unchecked; and that it will be difficult to find men even for those positions which must obviously be occupied by male teachers. The latest figures concerning the relative numbers on the staff show that—apart from teachers of needlework, who give only a part of their time to the schools—the female contingent outnumbered the male by almost two to one, the totals being 816 and 413 respectively. This tendency is, as Mr. Archibald remarked, partly accounted for by the demand for cheap labour in the department. Another reason, however, is that the pupil teacher's life is notoriously very hard; and boys, having a wider field of choice than girls, prefer other professions. The situation to which attention was prominently directed yesterday is serious alike for the schools and for the teachers. It ought to be deeply pondered, not only by the Minister, but also by the Teachers' Union, which possesses more practical knowledge of the subject than any other class. In the meantime it is at least satisfactory to find that the Education Department and the University authorities are co-operating to promote the welfare of the young teachers, although it is doubtful whether the scheme outlined by the Minister is the best which could be suggested.

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EDUCATIONAL REFORM—PUPIL TEACHERS.

Mr. ARCHIBALD moved:—"That, in the opinion of this House, it is imperative to reform the education system in respect of—1. Stopping the overwork and strain upon female pupil teachers. 2. Giving pupil teachers adequate and just training." He said he did not wish to make an attack on the education system, as it was one of which they were proud. There were times, however, when they should see that the conservative crust should not cover them, and they should not become hidebound in their system when there was a possibility of improvement. It was only fair that their education system should be enquired into as other matters of vital importance. The subject was one that ought to be considered by Parliament and the people of South Australia. It was being considered at the present time in the old country. There were many men and women who had made a study of education on both sides of the world, and they were not surprised to find weaknesses, which he thought, were capable of being repaired. It was a matter of vital importance, considering the great strides that were being made on the Continent of Europe regarding manufactures, trade, and commerce, and it was absolutely necessary that they should be in a position to do what their Continental rivals were doing. They were doing great and good work, but he thought that in many instances they were blundering at it, but not because of any desire on the part of the authorities. There was one remarkable fact borne out by authorities in England, and he did not think there could be any dispute about it and that was so far as the moral education of the British system was concerned it compared favourably with that of the Continent of Europe. There were a number of citizens who took a lively interest in our education system, and discussed it for the benefit of all. One was Professor Bragg, of the Adelaide University, who, on his return from a trip to Europe a few months ago, presented a report to the Minister of Education. It was a pity that it had not been printed among the Parliamentary papers, and he hoped to see that done. There were many reports in the Blue Books and on the files concerning education, but none was equal to Professor Bragg's report. He did not think that they were getting the best they possibly could out of the money they were spending on education. His attitude was not one of hostility towards the Minister of Education, but they spent a very fair sum on education, and members had a perfect right to ask if the Department could not go on a certain line that had been followed in the old country. The system of training pupil teachers was extremely defective. He believed that it had been very largely copied from the British system, but it was unfair to pupil teachers, and one result was that some of those who passed the examinations were not the best fitted to become teachers in the public schools. At the present time the pupil teachers were not bound as apprentices the same as they were in England. They became pupil teachers, and had to do what was unfair to them—a terrible amount of routine work, which, as a matter of fact, in many instances broke down their health. He was surprised at the number of pupil teachers whose health broke down during the time of training, and it could be easily prevented. Besides the routine work they were responsible for the children's books, and on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday mornings had to attend the Training College, and had studies at night. The drudgery they had to go through was of such a character as to break down their health. It was especially so in the case of the females who had to work harder because they had the sewing lessons to attend to. The Department were anxious to keep up the supply of the female teachers. It was the old question of female labour being cheaper than male, and the Government were no better or worse than any one else. If they wanted to have good teachers the best way was not to give them drudgery which impaired their training. If a boy wanted to be a lawyer or an engineer he would not have a chance if he spent all his time running messages and on such like work. Many cases could be cited—but he did not wish to particularize—in which the strain upon pupil teachers had been so great that they had been compelled to leave their schools and go to an asylum. On recovering the patients had settled down to domestic life, and no trace of any mental disorder had ever afterwards been apparent, clearly proving that the temporary derangement was the result of strain and overwork. At present pupil teachers had to pass an examination. They had two opportunities of passing; but if they failed twice they were practically knocked out, although the Government could employ them in some other direction. Moreover, it was very easy for the department to raise the standard of the examination so as to prevent them from passing. The existing system allowed a lot of young people to do the drudgery of the schools, although there was no hope of many of these persons ever being employed by the department. The system—bad as it was for the teachers—was worse for the schools, because it reacted upon them. What was the report with regard to our teachers at the present time? That they were splendid in matters of technique, but lacking in breadth of study. The people were complaining of practically the same evil in the old country. Last year a Departmental Commission enquired into this matter in England, and, as a result of their labours, recommended some very sweeping reforms. The time had arrived in South Australia when the same question should be investigated. He did not ask for a Royal Commission, because he questioned if members were the best persons to deal with it. He might, however, suggest the lines on which an alteration should be made. He would abolish the present system of training pupil teachers, and go in practically for a system of apprenticeship. It was a bad policy to have a lot of young people about our schools who were never likely to pass at all. It would be better to apprentice promising young pupils for four or five years. After the first twelve months, which they might spend in the schools, they should spend two years in the Training College, so that in their final year of apprenticeship they might return to their schools, and be a valuable assistance to the head teachers. How could such a system be brought about? It had been suggested that the University might take the matter over, and our secondary schools had been mentioned. It would be for the Government to first decide whether our secondary schools attained a sufficiently high educational standard to warrant them taking over our pupil teachers. If the University would take them over he saw no objection to that being done. The University existed to a certain extent by virtue of the money of the taxpayer, and if they were willing to give guarantees to do the work he knew of no body more fitted to carry it out. If they would not give the guarantee, then it would be necessary for the Government to arrange another method for training the pupil teachers in the secondary schools. (Mr. Peake—"They can only get theoretical work there and not practical.") He thanked the hon. member for the interjection. All the training in the world would not make a teacher if the person had not the gift for it, and it behoved the authorities to pick out those who were fitted for the positions. The same thing applied to all walks of life. He was not asking the Government to spend public money to make teachers out of people who were not fitted. He had gone into one of their public schools and seen a young lady teaching a class of boys in such a manner that it could be seen at a glance that she had the gift for it, and she got more good out of them both in the interests of the department and the boys themselves. Certain of the teachers in their public schools had not the gift or talent for teaching, and it would do no harm if they were in other walks of life. They heard a lot about federation, and they knew that it would mean the shifting of a number of their industries, and it behoved them to put their house in order so that they could compete in a friendly way with their rivals. The reason Germany was gaining such a stronghold on the industries which formerly belonged to England was on account of her superior system of education. The matter of continuation of night schools was working out very well, and he hoped the South Australian authorities would take the matter up. In Switzerland and some of the Continental countries it was compulsory. He did not want that. Certain sections of their community were already moving in the matter, and the educational authorities and the municipal bodies might well consider whether it would not be well for them to co-operate in bringing that question to some definite issue. Encouragement should be given to their municipal bodies o take the matter up. The report of Professor Bragg to the Minister of Education dealt with the subject of night schools, and he said:—"Such schools are valuable in another way, as keeping boys for some years longer under the influence, even if limited, of a teacher, whereby they do not completely lose their school discipline. Moreover, they are sometimes made centres for the social life of the lads who attend them. In some cases the employers have been asked to join and have joined the committees of management, and take a considerable interest in the schools. Compulsory attendance at continuation schools is not universal. In Prussia, for example, it is left to the discretion of the local authorities. There are not wanting men of authority who would introduce it into England, e.g., Sir John Gorst, Vice-President of the Board of Education, who, speaking at Cambridge last December, said that he was 'strongly in favour of a law by which young people after going to work should be obliged to spend certain hours in the night schools.' In Saxony, with a population of about 3,000,000, there were in 1890 1,900 such schools, containing about 80,000 boys, besides 150 technical schools. In Saxe-Weimar, with a population rather less than South Australia, there were in 1895 450 such schools, with 5,100 scholars, besides twenty-six technical schools, with an attendance of 2,000. The primary school buildings are used in the majority of cases, and the primary school teachers do the work, receiving extra pay." The teachers might complain, but they existed for the training of the children, and he would be the last to suggest that they should do the work without some recompense. They should be asked if they were willing to take up the work, and those who did should receive extra pay. The system of night schools was tried some years ago and it failed, but that was no reason why they should not try again. No member—no matter what his political beliefs—would doubt for a moment that it would not be better if they could get the lads to spend that part of their life between 13 and 17 on some evenings in a continuation school. They would do far better than they were doing at the present time. There were two distinct schools as far as the Continent was concerned. There was the primary, which was practically unknown in South Australia, and but very little known in the old country, into which the lads passed when they came out of the elementary schools. Here they were given an education to fit them for taking the position of managers, foremen, and leading hands, and the boys who passed through these higher primary schools were far better fitted for positions than those who simply went through the elementary. It had been contended that the great headway the Germans had made was due to these schools. (Mr. Copley—"By whom.") By authorities in England. The Corporation of Manchester sent an educational Commission to Germany four years ago, and they reported that the superiority of the Germans over the British in matters relating to chemistry and mineralogy was the result of higher primary education. As far as the higher primary school was concerned, he admitted that the School of Mines was running very much upon those lines, and they should do all they could to make it on all fours with the primary schools. There was one weakness, he thought, in connection with the School of Mines. They had no right to teach any manufacturing there. The higher primary school or the School of Mines should be for the purpose of learning scientific knowledge. Practical knowledge was only to be acquired in the workshop or factory. (Mr. Peake—"Can you turn a good workman out in the workshop if he has not got the faculty?") They often found excellent drawing-room engineers who could talk to the ladies, but when it came to taking up electricity they did not know how it was done, and that was the result of the learning without the practical knowledge. (Mr. Peake—"You are destroying your own argument, as the pupil teacher would have to go into the schools.") He was not. If the hon. member's son was apprenticed, say to carpentering, he would expect the employer to teach him the trade, and not keep him minding the gluepot and running messages all the day. Under their educational system that was what the pupil teachers were doing, and it was very unjust to make them do it. They should either be taught their profession while at the schools or sent back to the Training College. As far as the secondary schools were concerned, the only difference he could see between them and the primary schools was that they were for the lawyers and physicians, those where all the respectable people came from. The secondary schools were for the learned profession and the primary for the hard work. He would ask the Minister to bring the matter before his colleagues. If they made the School of Mines on all fours with the primary schools it might be argued that they would get a different type of teachers. He hoped they would, and the results generally would be better to the taxpayer of South Australia. He would like to refer to the remarks of Professor Huxley, who was not of the opinion of Matthew Arnold, and who said in effect that by a study of modern languages and science it was quite possible to get all that was required. There was no one who had done more for education in England than Professor Huxley, and he said:—"It is maintained that the whole fabric of society will be destroyed if the poor, as well as the rich, are educated; that anything like sound and good education will only make them discontented with their station, and raise hopes which, in the great majority of cases, will be bitterly disappointed. It is said there must be hewers of wood and drawers of water, scavengers and coalheavers, day labourers, and domestic servants, or the work of society will come to a standstill. That, if you educate and refine everybody nobody will be content to assume these functions, and all the world will want to be ladies and gentlemen. One hears this argument most frequently from the representatives of the well-to-do middle class; and, coming from them, it strikes me as peculiarly inconsistent, as the one thing they admire, strive after, and advise their own children to do, is to get on in the world, and, if possible, rise out of the class in which they were born into that above them. Society needs grocers and merchants as much as it needs coalheavers; but if a merchant