

"DIED AT HIS POST."

This phrase—almost literally accurate—might justly be added to any epitaph designed to mark the final resting place of the late Mr. Alfred Williams (Director of Education), who died last night. Without any mere rhetorical flourish, may soberly and fairly be expressed the opinion that he sacrificed his life on the altar of his duty, as he interpreted the word. Possibly his zeal was in excess of strict needs; but that is only another way of saying that, like every other missionary, he was in deadly earnest in seeking to realize his ideals, and recked little what befel the creator so long as the creation became consummated. He might conceivably have achieved more if he had tried to accomplish less; but, on the other hand, he might not have done anything at all worth noting if he had not infused energy, vigour, and pride-in-work into those who immediately surrounded him, and into the far-spread, rank-and-file whose operations he directed. At the present time there is no need to elaborate that aspect of the matter; nor could such an elaboration be made in good taste. The point is that, in a period when work-shirking and eye-service are too popular, and too much encouraged in certain propaganda, here was a man who placed no limitation upon his exertions in what he believed to be the people's interest, and never even thought of thinking of himself at all. And this thought intensifies the general feeling of regret that his chief hope and aspiration in the latter years were not gratified—the aspiration and the hope that he might be privileged before his weak health gave way altogether, to reorganize the Education Department in accordance with a scheme which he had conceived and wrought out with infinite care and solicitude, and which bespoke a man of marked ability and great resource.

But, although the designer has passed hence, the design remains, and the ideals which it embodies, with the means to their attainment, will be of great practical advantage to his successors. The more so, because Mr. Williams was no theoretical visionary, but knew his work as a true workman. He had ascended virtually every rung of the State educational ladder from the bottom to the top. He was well aware of the various contrasted points of view—the infant scholars, the upper class boys and girls and those of the teacher in every grade—and he sought in one comprehensive scheme to harmonize all conflicting interests. In the endeavour, and largely because of the endeavour, he died. From the personal standpoint a bad day for Mr. Williams was the day on which he left the comparative serenity of the headmastership of the largest school under the control of the Education Department, and accepted the Directorship of that department which in a few short years he so widely expanded. Then he bade adieu to a relatively care-free life, and assuredly shortened his years. When he made the change he had no adequate notion of what he was undertaking, or of the gauntlet of trouble through which he would have to pass on his way to his goal—jealousies, conflicting ambitions, cross-purposes, and

the political influence and diplomatic considerations, which last, are, have been, and always will be so long as they may remain in exercise, the despair of every reforming organizer of a State system of education which has to be administered with the assistance of many hundreds of widely scattered people. Almost from the beginning to the ending of his worrying official career Mr. Williams chafed sorely under his limitations in this respect. Not that he was absolutely checked by his Ministerial superiors in what he proposed, but because he had to define and confine his broad plans according to his cramped opportunities. At the right time the Government will doubtless consider whether, in the existing circumstances, it would be possible for even a heaven-born genius to be completely successful as Director of Education unless he were allowed reasonable freedom from political control. The position now vacated so sadly will presumably be kept in commission during this transitional stage in the evolution of the department; and, whether the office of Director be revived or not, whoever may follow Alfred Williams will not be able to excel him in zeal and devotion to duty; and all things considered, few will be his equal in that plain commonsense which is also called practical sagacity.

Register, Feb. 20/13

**THE LATE MR. WILLIAMS.**

The funeral of Mr. A. Williams, Director of Education, will leave the residence, "Palmyra," Henley Beach-road, Torrens-ville, this afternoon at 3 o'clock for the North-road Cemetery, where the interment will take place. The Acting Minister of Education (Hon. J. G. Bice) stated on Wednesday that he had given instructions that all schools were to be closed on the day of the funeral as a mark of respect. It has been decided also to close the Education Office in the afternoon. The news of Mr. Williams' death, published in other States, has brought several telegrams of sympathy to Mrs. Williams in her bereavement, among them being messages from Mr. F. Tate (Director of Education in Victoria), Mr. P. Board (Director of Education in New South Wales), and Dr. Smith, principal of the Teachers' Training College, Melbourne. Members of the South Australian Teachers' Union are requested to assemble in the vicinity of the North Adelaide Tramway waiting-room in the afternoon to attend the funeral. Upon the arrival of the cortege there they will join it and march to the cemetery. At the Lefevre Peninsula school on Wednesday the whole of the children, 1,200 in number, were assembled in the yard and addressed by the headmaster, Mr. S. H. Warren, who paid a fitting tribute to the memory of the deceased Director of Education. The children remained for some minutes in silence and with heads bowed, as a mark of respect.

Register, Feb. 21/13

Many expressions of regret were heard on Wednesday concerning the death of the Director of Education (Mr. Alfred Williams), whose heroic struggle against ill health and growing weakness had lasted for more than two years, only in the end to be met by sudden physical collapse, supervening upon an attack of influenza. The funeral will leave deceased's residence, Henley Beach road, Torrens-ville, for the North Road Cemetery, at 3 o'clock this afternoon. The President of the Teachers' Union directs the attention of all members to an advertisement in another column. All the schools that are sufficiently near to Adelaide to receive the news of the Director's death in time will be closed to-day, and the Education Office, in Flinders street, will not be open during the time of the funeral. On Wednesday the South Australian education authorities received messages of condolence from Mr. Peter Board (Director of Education in New South Wales), Mr. F. Tate (Director of Education in Victoria), Dr. Smith (Principal of the Teachers' Training College, Melbourne), and other educationists who had known Mr. Williams. As on various occasions during the latter's illness, Mr. M. M. Maughan, B.A., the chief inspector of schools, is presiding at the Education Office. The matter of his appointment as Acting Director of Education will come before Cabinet to-day. Our Murray Bridge correspondent telegraphed on Wednesday:—"The memory of the late Director of Education was impressively revered at public and high schools to-day." At the Lefevre's Peninsula School on Wednesday morning the whole of the children (1,200) were assembled in the yard and addressed by the head master (Mr. S. H. Warren). A fitting tribute was paid to the memory of the deceased Director. The children remained for some minutes in silence, with heads bowed.

**IN MEMORY**  
 Alfred Williams, Director of Education.  
 February 18, 1913.

The world went on unheeding, and the sun  
 Set in calm splendour o'er the western sea;  
 All Nature was abush—the day was done—  
 As his brave soul passed calmly back to Thee.

His working day had closed; and—though to him  
 It seemed so much remained to do, to dare—  
 His Father called him from Earth's schoolroom  
 dim  
 And bade him rest where fields are bright and  
 fair.

And so he passed—passed from Earth's fret and  
 strife,  
 Passed in calm splendour like the setting sun;  
 Passed to the solace of the Higher Life.  
 And heard the Master's greeting voice—"Well  
 done."

WINNIE FAIRWEATHER.