

EDUCATION IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA.

A CRITICISM OF THE CENSUS.

Referring to the education statistics issued by the Commonwealth Statistician and published in "The Advertiser" on Thursday, the Director of Education (Mr. A. Williams) made some pertinent remarks on Friday, which place South Australia in a more favorable light than the figures indicated. He said it had been stated that apparently 4,400 boys and 4,293 girls (a total of 8,702 children) in this State were "not receiving instruction."

In order to secure uniformity for comparison with the other States the ages taken were from 6 to 13 years. In South Australia, however, the "compulsory" ages were from 7 to 13, and it was the instruction of children between these ages that the Education Department was responsible for. Therefore, from the 8,702 must be deducted 5,228, between the ages of 6 and 7, reducing the total to 3,474 "not receiving instruction."

Taking the census figures, said Mr. Williams, it would be seen that the number of children in South Australia between 7 and 13 years of age was:—

Age.	Total.	At public schools.	At private schools.	Taught at home.
7	7,895	5,836	1,037	205
8	7,936	6,320	991	147
9	7,586	6,148	947	147
10	7,951	6,402	1,047	130
11	8,056	6,430	1,053	124
12	7,405	5,449	972	78

Totals .. 46,829 30,585 6,042 831

According to the above figures, Mr. Williams explained, the number of children being taught at public and private schools and at home was 43,458, which, subtracted from the total of 46,829, left 3,371 "not receiving instruction." This was 7 per cent. of the total number required by law to be at school. The statistics from the "attendance record" of the department showed that in the quarter of 1911, in which the census was taken, there were 37,980 children between the ages of 7 and 13 years on the rolls of the public schools. The returns furnished to the Government Statist showed that 6,992 children were attending private schools, bringing the total to 44,912. Thus out of 46,829 children between 7 and 13 years of age in the State of South Australia, 44,912 were "recorded" as receiving instruction, leaving 1,917 not receiving instruction. This was 4 per cent. of "non-attendants." These children (1,917 in number) included all those who were prevented by permanent infirmity, mental defect, and living outside distance from any school. A school census of the whole metropolitan area, taken a few years ago, showed that less than 1 per cent. of the children of compulsory ages were not meeting the requirements of the Education Act, and counts made in different parts of that area since gave a similar result.

SIR JOHN DUNCAN.

—A Life Sketch.—

The Hon. John James Duncan, upon whom the dignity of knighthood has been conferred in connection with the list of King's Birthday honours, has long stood in the front rank of South Australia's pastoralists and politicians, and the royal recognition of his services in the new distinction he now enjoys will be popular with all who have watched his career in commercial, private, or public life. The new Knight was born at Anstruther, Fifeshire, Scotland, in 1845, and came to South Australia at the age of nine years with his father, the late Capt. Duncan. The last-named and Mr. (afterwards Sir Walter) Watson Hughes, were associated in the ownership of a sheep station, which comprised the present copper mining districts of Moonta and Wallaroo.



SIR JOHN DUNCAN.

shire, Scotland, in 1845, and came to South Australia at the age of nine years with his father, the late Capt. Duncan. The last-named and Mr. (afterwards Sir Walter) Watson Hughes, were associated in the ownership of a sheep station, which comprised the present copper mining districts of Moonta and Wallaroo.

—Pioneer Mining.—

Sir John was educated privately at the station, and subsequently at St. Peter's College, at Bentley, near Gawler, and at the Watervale Grammar School. He has always been actively associated with the copper industry, for in his childhood he was the bearer of the news of the discoveries made at Wallaroo to his uncle, the late Sir W. W. Hughes. He drove the first four miners, who had been engaged at the Burra, to the Wallaroo Mines, and when Moonta opened up he conveyed the first workers there. His share in the early development of the mines was the carting of water for the men from Tickera to Tipara. On leaving school he entered the office of Elder, Smith, & Co., and after three years became accountant at Wallaroo Smelting Works and Mines. He retired to visit Great Britain, and on his return took over the management of his uncle's pastoral properties. On the death of Sir W. W. Hughes, in 1887, he became proprietor of the Gum Creek Estate, near the Burra, and Hughes Park, near to Watervale. On the latter property is Sir John Duncan's country house. Both the estates have been reduced lately, as Sir John has subdivided and sold a large area. In the seventies Sir John once had an alarming experience while inspecting pastoral country. He and two companions were caught in heavy floods in the Macumba Creek, and had to take refuge in a tree, where they remained four days and nights almost without food.

—Business Activities.—

Apart from his private concerns, which are large, Sir John has devoted much time to the service of his country, and to the encouragement of many industries. He has been a director of the Savings Bank for many years, and has always taken a

prominent position on the board. He was President of the Pastoralists' Association of South Australia and West Darling from 1905 to 1907, and represented it at meetings of the Federal Pastoral Council in Melbourne and Sydney. For years he has been President of the Northern Agricultural Society. He has been a captain of the volunteers, Chairman of the Upper Wakefield District Council, President of the Australian National League, and took a leading part in the formation of the Liberal Union.

—Political Life.—

His career in Parliament has been one of honour. Few, however, would recognise in the dignified member of the Legislative Council, delivering one of his carefully prepared and lucid speeches, the gentleman who, in earlier days, was one of the fiery orators of the House of Assembly. Not a single present member in either branch of the Legislature was in Parliament when in 1871 Sir John Duncan, then 26 years of age, was elected to the Assembly for Port Adelaide. In the general election of 1875 he was chosen for that portion of the same district which was named Wallaroo. He was not a candidate at the subsequent contest, as he shortly afterwards visited Europe, and acted as a Commissioner for South Australia at the Paris Exhibition. In 1884 he was elected for Woorroora, which he represented until 1890, when he withdrew from politics until the following year. Then he was chosen for the Northern District in the Upper House, for which he sat until 1896, when he again retired. A vacancy occurred in the Legislative Council in 1900, and Sir John was returned unopposed for his old constituency. He has been a member for that district ever since. At the last general election Sir John, with Mr. Pascoe, was unopposed. In 1901, on Sir Lancelot Stirling becoming President of the Council, he was chosen as Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Council, and with the defeat of the Labour Government he became the Leader of the Liberal Party in the Upper Chamber. He has received offers of portfolios in several Ministries, but has never accepted any Cabinet office.

MINISTER'S CONGRATULATIONS.

The Acting Premier (Hon. R. Butler) said on Friday afternoon:—"Speaking in behalf of the Government, I would like to say that I am pleased to know that the long and distinguished services of Mr. Duncan have been rewarded by His Majesty the King. He has the longest record of Parliamentary service in the State, and has sat in both the Upper and Lower Houses. Although he has not held Ministerial rank, it is well known that he could have done so had he desired. His unflinching courtesy and geniality have secured for him troops of friends on both sides of politics, and while he has always held strong political opinions, he has ever been regarded as a generous, fairminded opponent. I am sure all South Australians will join in the hope that he may live long to enjoy the honour which has been conferred upon him."

—Years of Disinterested Services.—

The Chief Secretary (Hon. J. G. Bice), Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council, said:—"I am pleased that His Majesty has seen fit to honour the Hon. J. J. Duncan. The distinction is one which has been earned by many years of disinterested service to the State. I heard his first political speech in 1871, when he contested the election for the district of Port Adelaide, with which Wallaroo was then joined, and he has given continuous and loyal service to the State ever since. During the last 20 years he has been a member of the Legislative Council, where his efforts have always been such as to earn the appreciation of members of all shades of political opinion. Personally I offer him my sincere congratulations."

Advertiser, June 20/12

Register, June 19/12

CHEAPER RUBBER.

IMPORTANT DISCOVERY.

LONDON, June 18.

Professor W. H. Perkin, Professor of Chemistry in Victoria University, Manchester, has announced the discovery of synthetic rubber. The professor says for commercial purposes it can be manufactured at a cost of half a crown a pound, and this price may be reduced to as low as a shilling. Fusel oil is produced from starch in maize, and then converted into isoprene, from which the rubber is extracted by contact with sodium.

UNIVERSITY STUDENTSHIPS.

On the recommendation of the Public Examinations Board of the University of Adelaide evening studentships, under regulations 440 and 448, have been awarded to the undermentioned persons for the year 1912:—Arts Course.—Allen, L. W.; Berry, Frances W.; Blair, Euphemia T.; Brouner, R.; Coles, H. H.; Davey, Constance M.; Fleming, S.; Gilbert, W. S. S.; Hardy, Mabel P.; Meldrum, E. D.; Newman, Kathleen M.; Phillips, Mary S.; Robin, Peatrce R.; Scholefield, G. W.; Smith, Iris E.; Steward, F. J. H.; Tmecke, E. W.; Warren, S. L.; Wemyss, Eleanor E. B.; Williams, Caroline M. Science Course.—Haselgrove, A. H.; Perrers, A. M.; Williams, H. B.