

# THE AUSTRALIAN Journal of Education

OFFICIAL ORGAN OF THE TEACHERS' ASSOCIATIONS OF NEW SOUTH WALES.

With which are Incorporated "The Australian Teacher" and the "Australian Technical Journal."

Registered at the General Post Office, Sydney, for transmission by post as a Newspaper.

Vol. IV.—No. 5.

NOVEMBER 15th, 1906.

Price, Sixpence.  
Annual Subscription, 5/-

## THE AUSTRALIAN Journal of Education

(With which are incorporated "The Australian Teacher" and the "Australian Technical Journal.")

The Organ of the Teachers' Associations  
of New South Wales.

All communications to be addressed to the Editor,  
"AUSTRALIAN JOURNAL OF EDUCATION," 17 Castle-  
reagh-street, Sydney.

NOVEMBER 15th, 1906

### Mr. Mackie and His Work.

The most significant event in educational matters this year in New South Wales is the inauguration of a new system of training for our teachers. The pupil teacher system is passing, and the first steps have been taken towards that happy condition of things in which no person shall be allowed to teach until he has been trained. At last we grant that educating children is at least half as difficult as doctoring adults. Teaching is recognised as a profession, and the teacher is to be given professional training to fit him for his work. Applications for the position of Principal of the Training College have been called for in these States and Great Britain, and Mr. Alexander Mackie, M.A., has been appointed Principal of the Sydney Training College, and within a few days he will be in our midst.

That gentleman comes to us with the centuries of practical interest in and knowledge of education which Scotch parentage implies, and with several years of educational experience in Wales, one of the most live quarters in matters educational to be found in the British Empire. Under the circumstances, it may be worth our while to consider what we desire and expect to be the outcome of Mr. Mackie's advent.

We may first of all point out that the Government has failed to grasp the real importance of the present educational juncture. Another appointment should have been made in addition to that of Principal of the Training College. A Professor of Education was required at our University, and, to secure the right man, the world should have been scoured, and a sufficiently liberal salary offered to attract to our shores the most expert educationist in the English-speaking world. This duty of our administrators, so clearly indicated in our Education Commissioners' report, has been evaded; as a consequence, a doubly heavy burden will fall to Mr. Mackie's lot, at least till such time as the State realises the importance of education.

The bringing about of this realisation on the part of our citizens of the vital importance to the community of education we consider should be a prime aim of the

new Principal, for it is fundamental to effectiveness in our schools of all grades, and in our Training College. Public appreciation of educational effort is as essential as sunshine to plant life. No man of weight in our midst has taken up this work. Mr. Mackie's position will give him the prestige necessary in anyone who is to do this work of organising public opinion on education in a large way. We have a sympathetic but ill-informed Parliament, and a public in much the same state. We look to Mr. Mackie to bring about in our midst something of the attitude of the German and American peoples towards education.

This work may be partly accomplished by public addresses and the like, but it will mainly be due to an intelligent stimulation of wisely-directed enthusiasm on the part of the teachers of the State. The new education to many of the public is synonymous with plasticine and ambidextral drawing. Unless such false notions are corrected—and the Department of Public Instruction has done little towards correcting them—all the talk of educational reform may produce little permanent effect. It is a case of "Wanted, a leader." Our teachers have the enthusiasm. Whatever measure of reform has been secured, they, and not the Department, must take the credit for. But they feel the need of guidance with regard to much of the How and the What of education. If Mr. Mackie can turn out yearly from 100 to 200 well-informed, professionally-trained, enthusiastic and morally earnest young men and women as teachers, can stimulate and aid the present body of teachers, can pin the Department irrevocably down to reform in education, and can convince Parliament and public that education, whether considered morally or economically, is worth while, then he will have justified his appointment. He will find among the public, among the officers of the Department, and among the teachers many capable of sharing in this national work. We wish him God-speed in the work he has undertaken.

### The Schools' Exhibition at Melbourne.

#### NATURE STUDY IN VICTORIA.

Nature Study was a strong feature in the Exhibition. Everywhere were to be seen collections of insects, insect-homes, plants, shells, and minerals.

That this branch of education means much more than the collecting of specimens was shown by the numerous exhibits of "Life Histories" of such creatures as the Emperor Gum Moth, the Vine Moth, the Mosquito, the Bee, and the Frog.

Well-mounted drawings, or preserved specimens, with explanatory notes, served to illustrate each stage of development.

These drawings were of varying degrees of excellence; but some of the superior ones were strongly reminiscent of familiar illustrations in well-known text-books, and were less convincing as examples of true Nature Study than the cruder drawings, evidently made from the natural object under observation.

Living specimens were not wanting; for the small aquarium and vivarium with their inhabitants showed how opportunity was offered to follow out the various life histories in the schoolroom.

The life histories of plants were neither so numerous nor so well worked out. Supplies of wild flowers arrived daily, and these were tastefully distributed throughout the Courts, and an expert was deputed to see that the flowers had labels with their names (botanical and popular), their natural orders, etc. Not only did they serve for decorative purposes, but also gave a good idea of the native flora of each district.

Most interesting were the children's books of information, in which had been entered their notes on the plant or animal under observation. One girl, a pupil of the Johnsonville State School, had, in addition to the life history of the Emperor Gum Moth, recorded her observations on 59 of these pupæ, kept in the school. She had tabulated her observations thus: (a) The dates when the cocoon was formed; (b) when the moth emerged; (c) number of days in cocoon; (d) sex of the moth. From these observations she deduced the following:—

Average number of days male moth in pupa stage, 296.

Average number of days female moth in pupa stage, 294.

Average number of days for all moths in pupa stage, 295.

Longest time noticed, 394.

Shortest time noticed, 171.

This information must be of value in connection with the question of two broods a year of this moth.

Some particularly fine exhibits were shown where the teacher himself had special scientific knowledge, or had had the assistance of a local naturalist. For instance, the insectivorous birds of one district were well represented in a very fine coloured chart; and a dozen pairs of birds of different varieties, with their eggs, were most skilfully mounted. Such an exhibit would be much beyond the reach of the average teacher.

In another court the Nature Study exhibits illustrated the industries of the Barnsdale District, viz.: fishing, mining, timber-growing, and dairying.

FISHING INDUSTRY.—This was represented by a collection of the fish found in