

"No Child Should Knock at the Door of a School and not be Admitted."

—Sir William Milton.



ANY years ago Sir William Milton, then Administrator of Southern Rhodesia, said that no child should knock at the door of a school and not be admitted. It has been the constant and earnest endeavour of the late administration under the British South Africa Company and of the Government of the Colony of Southern Rhodesia since it assumed office on the 1st October, 1923, to give effect to this policy.

One of the obvious difficulties in a new colony, with its wide spaces and scanty population, is the provision of education for children on the remoter farms. In Southern Rhodesia, a country as large as the British Isles, Holland and Belgium put together, having a European or white population of nearly 40,000, the difficulty appears in its extreme form.

THE FARMER'S CHILD.

When his child becomes six years old the farmer is faced with the question of education. He cannot send him to a Government boarding school, since these do not admit children under eight. He may, however, send him to one of the church school boarding houses which admit children below that age, or if there are ten children of school age in his vicinity, he may have a Farm School, or, if ten children of school age cannot be obtained, if he provides a suitable governess, he may have an Aided Farm School for one child alone, or for any small group of children less than ten, that can be got together. It will thus be seen that if the parent prefers to have his child educated at home the school is brought to the child instead of the child being sent to the school.

Briefly, a Government Aided Farm School is one in which the parents appoint a suitable governess, subject to the approval of the Department, and besides paying her salary, provide her gratis with board, accommodation and laundry. The Department pays a sum of £12 per scholar per annum in aid of the salary of the governess, and issues free of charge the necessary school books and material, except furniture, which the parents must supply. No tuition fees are charged by Government for pupils attending Aided Farm Schools. Two or more families (residing in close proximity to each other) may combine to establish an Aided Farm School for the benefit of their children. At the end of 1925 there were 92 Aided Farm Schools having an aggregate enrolment of 429 pupils.

FARM SCHOOLS.

In localities where ten or more children can be gathered together at one place, not within reach of another school, so as to attend school daily, the Government offers every facility for the establishment of a Farm School. In these schools the Government appoints a certificated teacher, pays the salary and provides the ordinary school requisites. The Department supplies a plan of a suitable building, a door and three casement windows, and timber for desks, seats and school cupboard, with plan and specification for making. The parents interested provide a building suitable as to size, shape, ventilation and light. They make the desks and seats in accordance with the design provided, and supply suitable board, accommodation and laundry for the teacher, who, of course, pays for such at customary rates. There are 50 Farm Schools.

PUBLIC AND HIGH SCHOOLS.

In addition to Farm Schools and Aided Farm Schools, there are thirty-three public, seven Government High Schools and four Aided Secondary Schools. The total number of pupils enrolled at the end of 1925 was 6,929, of whom 1,941, or 28 per cent., were boarders—a proportion probably unequalled anywhere in the Empire.

THE TEACHING PROVIDED.

Complete courses of primary and secondary education up to the standard of Matriculation are provided. The primary school course is followed in all farm schools, and as these are under Government inspection and control, it will be seen that a child starting its school life on a lonely farm follows in its main essentials the same course as a child attending school at the nearest town, mine or village; and that when the time comes to send the child as a boarder to one of the town schools, it has been prepared to take its proper place with its fellows. The High Schools in Salisbury, Bulawayo, Plumtree, Gwelo, and Umtali prepare pupils for the Matriculation examination.

There is an agricultural school in the Matopos district, with a farm attached (3,000 acres) which provides a three years' course for boys whose parents intend them to take up farming pursuits. It is intended to establish early in 1927 a technical school in Bulawayo.

Apart from the ordinary secondary school curriculum, instruction is given at the larger centres in commercial subjects—science and carpentry for boys, and botany, dress-making and domestic science for girls. School gardening, nature study and hygiene are also taught, and all town and village and most farm schools possess school libraries. All forms of sport incidental to school life are indulged in, and corps of Cadets, Boy Scouts and Girl Guides are trained by competent instructors.



Opening of Chancellor Hostel at Umtali.

Evening schools are conducted at centres where there is a demand for commercial training in shorthand, bookkeeping and typewriting, while instruction of a technical nature is given by members of the school and of the railway staffs of Bulawayo and Umtali; where engineering workshops of the Rhodesia Railways are located.

At the Eveline High School, Bulawayo, girls receive professional training as teachers, and generous grants are made by Government to assist them to complete their course, provided they undertake to serve the Department for a period equal in length to that of their training after they become fully qualified to teach.

THE COST TO THE PARENT.

Tuition fees per term per pupil vary from 20s. in the Kindergarten classes to 50s. above Standard V. There are four terms in the year. All books and material are supplied free. Reductions in the scale of fees charged are made if the accounts are paid within one month and also if there are three or more children of the same family attending.

Additional fees are charged for extra subjects, e.g., music, singing, art and dancing, and there is a small charge of 2s. 6d. per term for school games.

Boarding fees in Government School Boarding Houses are £12 per term for one child, £11 for two and £10 each for three or more. These fees include ordinary medical attendance, chemists' medicine and laundry charges, but not hospital fees.