

Association of Teachers in Technical Institutions.

THE twenty-second annual conference of the Association of Teachers in Technical Institutions was held at Manchester during the Whitsuntide holiday. On Whit Monday the Association was accorded an official welcome by Alderman F. J. West (ex-Lord Mayor of Manchester and a member of the Government Committee on Education for the Engineering Industry), Dr. Stanley Hodgson (Chairman of Governors, Royal Technical College, Salford), and Alderman J. Smith (Chairman of the Bury Education Committee). On the same day the retiring president, Mr. H. A. Norman (of Bury), inducted the president for the coming year, Mr. H. Ade Clark, who delivered his presidential address.

Those who expected Mr. Clark to deal with the matter of salaries (notice has been given that the present scales of salary for technical teachers will be terminated on Mar. 31, 1932) were disappointed. He insisted that the question was one for the Association's representatives on the Burnham (Technical) Committee, and said that whatever the outcome of negotiations might be, the Association could not lose sight of the problems which it had to face in company with the Board of Education, the local education authorities, and those engaged in the country's industry and trade. Those problems, he said, had been well summed up by one of his predecessors in office, Mr. A. E. Evans, in a paper to the last North of England Education Conference: "Soon after the War it became apparent that, hitherto unchallenged, or feebly challenged, commercial and industrial supremacy of Britain was likely to experience a fierce onslaught from other nations. It was recognised by those engaged in our technical institutions that one of the weapons of defence would be a system of education which would provide men and women—whether as leaders or as led—who realised the potentialities of this country and its associated Commonwealth as one of the great manufacturing, carrying, and exporting civilisations of to-day. To determine these potentialities and how best to educate men and women for their development was of vital importance."

With these points in mind, Mr. Clark surveyed the rapid developments of technical education, and, in indicating the Association's work in connexion therewith, he showed that it was not in Britain alone that the work of technical education was becoming recognised. The Association was in touch with the Technical Instructors' Society of Australia; it was linked to the great American continent through the English-Speaking Union; its views had been sought and given to the World Conference of Education Associations at the Geneva meeting, and its representatives had formed part of the English delegation which attended, last summer, the International Congress on Technical Education held at Liège under the auspices of the Belgian Government, when twenty-two nations were represented.

In spite of this development of national and international opinion, however, Mr. Clark indicated the difficulties which technical education had still to face.

If a scientific approach were to be made towards the solution of our problems of education and industry, it was clear that a small national co-ordinating committee would be necessary to bring together the information secured by local bodies which were forming machinery to draw together educationists and industrialists. The Board of Education was not yet prepared to admit the necessity of such a committee.

Frequently, too, those responsible for local educational administration seemed, "like the tradition-loving schoolmaster, unable to view problems except through academic spectacles. They . . . fear to face the implications of the changing needs of the kaleidoscopic industrial and commercial civilisation in which we live. . . . If rationalisation means the application of organised knowledge, the importance of technical education has to be realised by educationists as well as industrialists. The latter are by no means the only people clinging to ancient methods and conceptions."

To show that those who may be powers in public life also needed convincing, Mr. Clark referred to a recent speech of the Right Hon. Sir Herbert Samuel, M.P., who said (as though to show the superiority of university to technical education) that although technical colleges may be useful and necessary, non-technical institutions gave something better. Men, he said, are not content with obtaining the means of getting a living; they want to live; and the most powerful events of our time do not turn upon economic issues. In such thinking, Mr. Clark suggested, there is a lack of clarity. "Does not a university provide technical education? What sort of doctors, lawyers, architects, would we have if it did not? And do technical colleges not teach the art of living? Is there any better way that such an art can be taught than by the relationships of men (social, industrial, and commercial) made through the work they have to perform in the world? Where would our art of living be without our engineering, our chemistry, our building, and our domestic science? And is there any art or ideal or joy that is not ultimately dependent on economic issues?"

Among the resolutions dealt with by the Conference was one asking for a review of the conditions of entry into various branches of industry. It stressed the desirability of remission of some period of apprenticeship for ex-full-time pupils of senior and junior technical schools, the need for an extended provision of opportunity for all entrants into industry to pass into the ranks of skilled workers, and the need for further provision of part-time day courses for apprentices and learners. Considerable discussion was also centred upon a resolution which included a declaration that a knowledge of biology is part of a sound general education, and that more experts are needed in biological subjects for the proper development of agriculture and industry.

In connexion with the Conference, an excellent exhibition of books and apparatus was provided by a number of publishers and apparatus manufacturers.

Organisation of a Locust Campaign.

THE locusts constitute one of the oldest known plagues of agriculture, but the efforts to study them have always been sporadic and local, while the problem is a very wide one. It is very gratifying to learn, therefore, that the Empire Marketing Board, acting on the recommendations of the Committee on Locust Control of the Economic Advisory Council,

has made a grant of £2720 towards the organisation of exhaustive investigations on locusts. The grant represents one half of the estimated cost of investigations during the first year, the other half being covered by contributions from the various British territories participating in the scheme.

The investigations are being conducted by the