

THE TEACHING OF HISTORY.

The "London Letter" published in the November number of "Headway" contains a paragraph upon the teaching of History in the public schools, including reference to the League of Nations. From it we quote the following:—

"I hear that certain education authorities, and even headmasters and mistresses, are forbidding League of Nations lectures to be given in their schools, on the ground that they are political propaganda. . . . Happily, even the Government Departments know better than that. The Board of Education has just issued a pamphlet on the subject, entitled 'The Teaching of History,' drawn up by His Majesty's inspectors. The ideas contained in it are much the same ideas that have been put forward by the Union's Education Committee and in the Educational Conferences which the Union has organised all over the country during the past few years. Similar views were urged by the deputation from the Union on the teaching of history to the Board of Education in May, 1921, and it is significant that Mr Fisher's introduction to the pamphlet lays special emphasis on the need of including instruction in World History as part of the historical training given in schools and colleges. This note is also sounded in the pamphlet itself, which is an admirable summary of the tendencies towards the widening of the scope of history teaching in England.

"The Board of Education has also issued a new syllabus in General History for the Board's final examination of students in Training Colleges. This syllabus is a careful and detailed sketch of World History, containing reference also to the League of Nations, and teachers anxious to take the wider view will now be equipped with the necessary knowledge. Let us have no more nonsense about political propaganda, for on the League of Nations depend the life and happiness of the future generation."

In connection with this, the following account of what has been done in one school, given in the December number of the same paper, is of great interest:—

A SCHOOL EXPERIMENT.

At a certain school in the North of England the teacher in charge of his-

tory and geography is a keen student of the League of Nations, which he regards as a fortunate example of a great institution which the children can actually study in process of growth. The study of a living, growing institution is bound to shed light on the growth of institutions of the past, and vice versa. The history and geography lessons are closely co-ordinated with each other, and with the study of the working of the League. A complete account would fill a book. A few points only can be noted.

The scheme of work is briefly as follows:

Geography.—First and second years. The outlines of the world, treated in an elementary, descriptive manner. Third year: League of Nations and the countries in it. Fourth year: The principles of geography, treated in such a way as to revise the whole world, with the British Isles in detail.

History.—A three years' course in world history (as treated in Webster). The third year's work concludes with a fairly thorough survey of the history of the League. The fourth year is devoted to revision, with reference to whatever papers are set for the first school examination. This year the Fourth Form are doing English history, 55 B.C.-1880, in outline, with 1688-1880 in more detail.

The 210 pupils under the charge of this teacher (not the whole school) are organised into a League "Assembly." Each of the fifty-four members of the League is represented by a group of pupils, who take a special interest in the country they represent, in addition to the ordinary class work. Each class of thirty or so is a smaller Assembly, in which thirty countries are represented—one pupil to each country. This individual or group work varies considerably, but quite a number of the pupils can acquit themselves creditably, and one or two have shown a knowledge which one can only describe as verging on the phenomenal. Such work is based on "The People of all Nations," magazines like "Headway," and ordinary history and geography books. Debates can be based on this work, e.g.: (1) Which is the best country to emigrate to? (2) Italy v. Greece, etc. The latter would take the form of a meeting of the League Council (plus Greece, of course).

Once the children become familiar with their countries, their knowledge can be utilised in many and far-reaching ways. Thus, even in the fourth year course, dealing with the general principles of mathematical, physical, and human geography, the following method is useful. In dealing with climate, for instance, the individuals representing countries supply details, which are then co-ordinated. Thus, Italy, Greece, etc., are noticed to have the same type of climate—the Mediterranean; and the main points of world geography are arrived at inductively.

In addition to the ordinary school library, there is a special history and geography library, including the best text-books and general works; also all the literature of the League of Nations Union which is of any interest to children. Ten copies of Miss Spaul's "Fight for Peace" were taken to the school when the book first appeared, and have been in active—very active—service ever since.

The school, or rather the master concerned, possesses a set of lantern slides showing "The League at Work," which are exhibited periodically, with an accompanying lecture.

The above brief sketch by no means does justice to the work, but it must suffice. In conclusion, let it be said, no direct propaganda of a sermonising or biased character is indulged in. The history and geography of the world is used to give the children some understanding of the world in which they live, and of which the League of Nations is an important feature. The League of Nations is used to infuse living interest into the history and geography. A history or geography which ends in 1920 or before is (if not antiquarian), at least not the history or geography of the present world.

(This example has since been followed by other British schools.)

BRAVE RULERS.

Rani Saheba, of Jaudan State, Kathawar, has adopted Prohibition as a State Policy. This is the second Indian State to go dry. Both States have a woman ruler. Rajahs and Marajahs hesitate to follow the brave lead set by the Begum of Bhopal and the Rani Saheba of Jaudan.