

DEPARTMENTAL EXPENDITURE.

Table No. 8 of the Appendix contains a summary of the cost of the Department, and of the expenditure in respect of all the services under the control of the Minister of Education, for the financial year ending 31st March, 1881. The total amount expended for the year on office salaries, travelling expenses, teachers' examinations, and contingencies was £2,482 10s. 4d. Owing to the teachers' examinations being now held two months earlier, the cost of two examinations is included in the year's accounts. The amount shown as received in fees from candidates at the last examination was sufficient (within £5 or £6) to cover the whole cost of the examination.

As has been already stated, other duties besides those connected with the administration of the Education Act are now devolved upon the department, and consequently a portion only of the office expenses is fairly chargeable against the public-school system. The sum of £1,200 a year may be taken as representing very fully the proportion which should be so charged. This amount is at the rate of $4\frac{3}{4}$ d. for each scholar in average attendance, and $3\frac{1}{2}$ d. for each scholar belonging to the schools on the average of the roll numbers at the end of the four quarters of 1880. These sums should be added to the totals in Table J on page 10, in order to show the gross cost of each scholar for the year.

RESULTS AS ASCERTAINED BY INSPECTION.

The best information that can be obtained as to the actual state of education in the schools is supplied by the annual reports made to the several Boards by the Inspectors. As a rule, the reports for the year 1880* record progressive improvement in the efficiency of the schools and the quality of the teaching, but do not deal in indiscriminate praise. There is a general acknowledgment that much needs to be done before all the schools can be said to be well taught. In some of the districts there is a considerable proportion of teachers that do not thoroughly know their work; and most of the Inspectors complain that sufficient pains are not always taken to make pupils understand what they learn, and to develop their intelligence. Too many of the teachers set the children to learn lessons instead of actually teaching them. Some of the head-teachers do not efficiently supervise the work done by their assistants, or give them sufficient practical instruction in the art of teaching. One of the Inspectors, who speaks highly of the efficiency of the majority of the teachers in his district, attributes unsatisfactory results in some schools to "unskillful, erroneous teaching, and downright incapacity to instruct scholars in the higher standards." Another says, "Of course a large proportion of the failures is due to absenteeism and irregular attendance; but in addition to these acknowledged hindrances to successful teaching there are others, and they are, in my opinion, defective teaching in the preparatory classes, the absurd system of cram pursued in some schools, and the disinclination or inability of a few teachers to adapt their methods of instruction to the standard system. . . . Until masters make up their minds to perform their work in a systematic and progressive manner, or their places are supplied by thoroughly-trained persons, the educational aspect of the district will always appear to more or less disadvantage. . . . As a body, the teachers are very anxious about the success of their pupils, and spare neither time nor trouble to produce satisfactory results. So far as I am capable of judging, it is more often want of skill than want of will that causes failure." From one large district it is reported that in many schools the subjects that "do not count in the standard examination" are not well taught, and particularly that the teaching in elementary science "appears to be of too abstract and general a character, and to take too little account of facts and processes already familiar to the pupils." In this connection the testimony of the Southland Inspector is calculated to be useful: he says, "The schools that got the best results in the science subjects invariably passed well in the essentials." On the whole it appears that it is highly necessary that the Inspectors devote a considerable proportion of their time to the work of

* These are printed in a separate Parliamentary Paper: Appendix to Journals of House of Representatives, 1881, E.-1B.