

additions"; also that by a circular of February, 1908, the limitation of the use of this proportion of the grants to small additions and alterations was removed; but it should be remarked that the last-named circular stated in clear terms the condition upon which any part of the grants could be so used—namely, only after the Boards had "made due provision for the requirements" in respect of maintenance and rebuilding; neither circular gives authority for using the money for or in aid of the cost of new schools. So many are the school buildings that will require to be replaced in a few years that it is doubtful whether many of the Boards could comply with the condition named—a condition that appears reasonable enough on the ground of prudence alone. Even had they all been able to make due provision for the rebuilding expenditure that is imminent, and yet have had 7 per cent. of the grants left for additions and alterations, the deficiency of £56,954 would not have been accounted for, as the total of the maintenance grants for the four years 1905–8 has been £227,794, and 7 per cent. of this, which, on the hypothesis just made, the Boards might have so spent on additions, &c., is £15,496. Hence, on the most liberal interpretation of the facts, the amount of money diverted from the proper purpose of the maintenance grants, for which they are voted by Parliament and distributed by the Department, is not less than £41,000; probably £50,000 would be nearer the real amount.

The actual balance remaining (£38,000) may be sufficient to provide the cost of rebuilding the schools that require to be replaced in the next two or three years, but not to provide the proportion that should now be in hand of the cost of replacing those falling due at a later date.

It is clear that the Government cannot reasonably be asked to pay a second time moneys already given for rebuilding.

There appears to be only one way in which the Boards concerned can set the matter right—namely, by using the balances in hand on the General Account, which by paragraph (b) of section 52 of "The Education Act, 1908," may be used, *inter alia*, "for the expense . . . of erecting, fitting up, and improving school buildings."

It would be only fair to state here that these remarks do not apply equally to all the Boards—in fact, in the case of one or two Boards they do not apply at all.

II.

REPORT OF THE INSPECTOR-GENERAL OF SCHOOLS TO THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION.

The INSPECTOR-GENERAL OF SCHOOLS to the Hon. the MINISTER OF EDUCATION.

CERTAIN paragraphs in E.-1, which relate to attendance at school and the ages at which pupils, especially girls, leave the public schools, suggest the further discussion of some facts which bear on these points. Moreover, at least one Inspector of Schools calls attention to the serious leakage of children in the upper standards, and more than one Education Board discusses the problem of the "legal attender," who attends just the bare four-fifths of the school time which the law compels. Although, therefore, the subject may not attract the ordinary public, yet a few additional facts—the result of careful analysis of the returns—may be of interest to those who make and to those who administer the Education Acts, with a view to finding remedies for the evils indicated.

The following table shows approximately the percentage proportions of the pupils enrolled in Standard IV classes who left school without passing S4, S5, and S6, respectively, in the two periods 1896–99 and 1905–8 :—

	Per Cent.			
	1896–99.		1905–8.	
	Boys.	Girls.	Boys.	Girls.
Left without passing S4	22	20	12	11
Passed S4, but not S5	25	28	25	23
Passed S5, but not S6	18	17	17	19
Passed S6	35	35	46	47
	100	100	100	100

In other words, 54 per cent. of the boys and 53 per cent. of the girls leave school without passing Standard VI; 37 per cent. of the boys and 34 per cent. of the girls leave without passing Standard V; and 12 per cent. of the boys and 11 per cent. of the girls without passing Standard IV.