

the close of the financial year 1909-10 (three months after the close of the school year) in no case had a Board applied for the total amount available, and it would therefore appear that the grant is sufficient to cover the cost of the necessary books.

The principle of the free supply of text-books was last session extended to Standard III, and a sum was included in the vote for elementary education to defray the cost. The payment to Boards is 3s. per pupil, based upon the roll number for the current year (1910). This amount is considered ample to provide miscellaneous readers, arithmetic books, and supplementary readers, due regard being paid to the needs of the smaller country schools, where the teachers have to rely upon books in history and geography more than is considered necessary in the larger schools.

The following appeared in last year's report: "The alternative proposed [to free school-books]—viz., the adoption of a uniform series of reading-books—was strongly condemned by nearly all the experts consulted, as tending to a cast-iron uniformity of method. If such a series, moreover, were to be published in the Dominion, the expense of publication would be out of all proportion to the benefits sought to be gained, if the quality of the books bore any sort of comparison with that of corresponding books produced by leading firms in Great Britain; and the cost of renewal from time to time, to bring the contents up to date, would be almost prohibitive."

The School Journal, &c.

The *School Journal* has now completed its third year of issue, the first number having been published in May, 1907. It is published in three parts—viz., Part I (sixteen pages), for Classes I and II; Part II (sixteen pages), for Classes III and IV; and Part III (thirty-two pages), for Classes V and VI. There are no issues for December and January, but the November number is enlarged to provide reading-matter until the schools close, about the middle of December. For each year there are 168 pages in each of Parts I and II, and 336 pages in Part III. Public schools, Native schools, special schools (such as industrial schools), and certain institutions more or less under departmental control or supervision, are supplied with copies free, and an increasing number of private and secondary schools purchase copies at the rate of $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per copy for Part I, and 1d. per copy for each of Parts II and III. The monthly free distribution to children is (June, 1910)—Part I, 41,089; Part II, 39,544; Part III, 32,949. The sales are at the rate of 24,260 per annum for all parts.

The public schools are supplied with sufficient copies to provide for every child on the rolls of the various classes one copy of the appropriate Part of the *Journal*, Part I, II, or III, as the case may be.

Although the *Journal* aims primarily at being instructive rather than recreative, there is ample evidence from the Inspectors and teachers that its appearance each month is welcomed by the children, and that its influence tends to the very desirable end of fostering the habit and the love of reading. It differs from most of the miscellaneous Readers in that, being composed largely of articles belonging to well-defined series, it preserves a continuity absent from ordinary readers. These series deal with the history and geography of New Zealand, of the rest of the British Empire, and foreign countries, from the point of view of the human interests involved, so far as these appeal to a child's mind; with nature-knowledge of various kinds—the object being to extend what the pupils have learnt by their own observation, not to give information as a substitute for actual observation; with practical matters of hygiene; with civics and moral instruction; and with current topics, such as Polar exploration, Empire Day, Arbor Day, and so forth. It is believed that these subjects are so presented as to cultivate the imagination as well as to arouse thought.

The *Journal* is regularly illustrated; but, in addition to the illustrations contained in its pages, pictures and prints illustrating history, geography, and