

As the free-place system is extended, the amount received in tuition fees will naturally diminish, and the capitation grants from Government will increase.

The Education Amendment Act of 1908, by the introduction of a higher scale of capitation on free pupils, benefits not only those secondary schools which have few if any endowments, but also the more numerous class of schools whose income from endowments is small in proportion to the number of pupils; further, it will relieve from anxiety those schools where a necessity arises for a large building expenditure in any year, as the effect of the new sliding scale is that in any year the total of the net annual income from endowments and the capitation—that is, of the moneys available for the payment of staff salaries and working-expenses—cannot, with due safeguards, fall below £12 10s. per pupil—a sum which past experience shows to be just sufficient. Generally speaking, the finances of the secondary schools are in a sound condition, notwithstanding the large expenditure under the head of buildings; indeed, it would be as well if the governing bodies of many of the schools would consider carefully the need for increasing the staffs of their schools, and of giving greater encouragement in the form of increased salaries to assistant teachers. At present there is no doubt that in many cases the salaries paid to assistants are far too low. Efficient work cannot reasonably be looked for in a secondary school unless the staff is sufficient and well paid.

For the whole Dominion, if there are taken into account only the secondary schools that admit free pupils under the Act, we find from Table J5 the following position:—

Total number of pupils, excluding lower departments	...	...	4,421
Total net income from endowments (average of three years ending 31st December, 1908)	...	...	£11,775
Net income from endowments per head	...	...	£2·66
Approximate annual rate of capitation	...	...	£10·40
Total available net income per free pupil for salaries and management	...	...	£13·06
Total expenditure on salaries of staff	...	...	£45,081
" management	...	...	£2,851
" staff salaries, and management	...	...	£47,932
Expenditure per head on staff salaries	...	...	£10·60
" on management	...	...	£0·64
Total expenditure per head on staff salaries, and management	...	...	£11·24

The last figure given shows as nearly as may be the actual cost per annum for each pupil, exclusive of those in the lower departments. If we include all the secondary schools this average becomes £13·43 per head. Further details of the income and expenditure of the secondary schools will be found in Tables J6 and J7.

Lower Departments.—The Education Act provides that pupils who have not obtained a certificate of competency in the subjects of Standard V or a higher standard of the public-school syllabus may be admitted to a lower department of a secondary school if they are taught in a separate building or class-room and if no part of the actual cost of their instruction is met out of the endowments of the secondary school. There were lower departments in ten secondary schools during 1909; the total number of pupils in those departments was 189 (114 boys, 75 girls); the total cost of their instruction was £1,476; the total amount of fees received on their account was £1,499.

General Remarks.

Length of Time spent at Secondary Schools.—Table J2 shows the classification of pupils in secondary schools in 1909, according to years of attendance (exclusive of the time, if any, spent in the preparatory departments of such schools). The following is a summary of the returns, so far as they are available, for 1908 and 1909:—