

I.—EXTRACT FROM THE THIRTY-SIXTH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION.

PRIMARY EDUCATION.

NUMBER OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

The number of public schools open at the end of 1912 was 2,214, as against 2,166 for the year 1911. Thus there is an increase of 48.

In Table A the schools are classified according to the yearly average attendance. In a number of cases schools maintained in grades under Schedule A of clause 2 of the staffs and salaries regulations are included in this table in such grades, although the average attendance of these schools respectively for 1912 was below the minimum of the grades as indicated in Table A. The classification is in accordance with the provisions of the Education Amendment Act, 1908, which came into operation on the 1st January, 1909.

The number of small schools with an average attendance not exceeding 15 has increased since 1911 from 555 to 559. There has likewise been a marked increase in schools with an average attendance of 16 to 80—1,268 as compared with 1,225. Taking all the schools with not more than 80 in average attendance, we find an increase of 47 in the number of schools. Of schools with an average attendance of over 80 the number has increased by 1—387 as against 386. It will thus be seen that the total increase (48) has taken place almost entirely in the rural schools with one or two teachers only.

Schools with an average of 35 or under are sole-teacher schools. On referring to Table A it will be seen that there were 1,343 such schools. But, as already stated, schools are in some cases maintained in a higher grade than their average attendance would appear to warrant, while on the other hand a number of schools in charge of sole teachers at the beginning of the year had so risen in attendance as to be entitled to assistant teachers before the end of the year. Thus in Grade IV there were, in 1912, 26 schools the average attendance of which did not warrant the appointment of an assistant teacher, but in Grade III 9 schools had the services of an assistant teacher. There were therefore altogether 1,360 schools in 1912 in charge of sole teachers, an increase of 24 over last year. In other words, in 1912 sole-teacher schools formed 61·4 per cent. of the total number of public schools in the Dominion. The aggregate average attendance at these sole-teacher schools in 1911 was 24,759, or 17·1 per cent. of the total average attendance of the Dominion; in 1912 the aggregate was 24,113, or 16·4 per cent. The average per school was 17·7, or 23·2 omitting schools below 16 in average attendance.

The number of schools with two or more teachers was, in 1911, 830. In 1912 the number was 854, an increase of 24. Of these schools there were, in 1911, 31 with an average attendance exceeding 600, and 35 in 1912.

During the year 1912 85 schools were closed. Several of these schools, although reckoned as closed in their original form, were reopened in another: in some cases two schools were amalgamated: in some, half-time schools became separate full-