

APPENDIX G.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION.

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

The new system of physical education, the establishment of which was announced in last year's report, has made good progress, about a third of the teachers having received a course of instruction that has adequately fitted them to bring the system into operation in their schools. The experience of other countries having proved the futility of expecting teachers to gain the necessary knowledge by attendance at Saturday classes or by the casual visits of an instructor, it was decided to invite the co-operation of the Boards in an arrangement by which groups of schools should be closed for such time as would enable assemblage of the teachers for twelve days' continuous training. Twelve of such assemblages have been held in different parts of the country, in six cases the men going into camp. The result in every respect has been eminently satisfactory. Independently of the instruction which was the direct purpose of the classes, the teachers have benefited by meeting together in large numbers, they have had personal experience of the beneficial effects of the exercises, and an enthusiasm has been created which promises well for the success of the scheme. It may be observed that in arranging the dates of these classes advantage was taken as far as possible of the occasion of school vacations.

The number of public-school teachers who have received instruction at these classes to the 31st March last is 1,469, representing 629 schools and approximately 61,600 children.

Besides transit expenses, the teachers were either maintained free in camp or were given a maintenance allowance of £1 a week. The cost of maintenance in camp was below 12s. a week per head; not only are the camps more economical, but, in the opinion of the Department, greater efficiency is secured thereby.

The course of instruction specially prepared for the classes included—

- (1.) The theory and practice of exercise (in its relation to the normal growth and development of children).
- (2.) A definite series of progressive daily lessons in physical drill and correct methods of breathing, for use in schools.
- (3.) Personal hygiene, with special reference to the several physiologic systems of the body, and to the importance of forming daily habits relating to their functional activity.
- (4.) A course of organized games, and their relation to the mental and physical forces employed.
- (5.) Swimming, life-saving, and resuscitation drill.

During the course of their training a system of classification of the teachers according to proficiency was carried out, with a view of recruiting from their ranks the staff of instructors.

The classes have been open to teachers of private schools, and advantage has freely been taken of the privilege. In some cases it has appeared desirable to form special classes for the teachers of some of the private schools.