

*Unclaimed Contributions.*—It seems extraordinary that the fund should hold such a large sum as £610 on account of persons who have ceased to be contributors to the fund. The names of the persons entitled to the money have been repeatedly advertised in the *Journal of Education*, but without any response in the majority of cases. One ex-contributor is entitled to an amount of just over £100.

*General.*—War conditions have affected the fund in several ways which are worthy of notice.

The net increase in the number of contributors during the year was only 139, as compared with 175 in 1916 and 252 in 1915. The numbers of new contributors admitted in the last three years were 398, 428, and 522 in 1917, 1916, and 1915 respectively. The falling-off is primarily due to the decrease in the number of teachers' certificates granted by the Education Department. In 1915 373 certificates were granted, as compared with only 290 in 1917. It is probably further accounted for by the fact that a great many appointments to public schools are, during the war, of a temporary character only. It is not compulsory for a certificated teacher on his first appointment to a public school to become a contributor to the fund if he is appointed to a temporary position, and, although legislative provision has been made for such teachers during the currency of the war to elect to become contributors, very few of them apparently avail themselves of the opportunity.

It may be noted that by regulations under the Statute Law Amendment Act, 1917, any certificated teacher may be permanently appointed to any position in a public school while he is on active service, and if this is his first permanent appointment he must then become a contributor to the fund. The fact that he is unable to take up the duties of his position does not affect the matter, for his appointment may date from a time fixed by the Education Board. This provision is of considerable advantage to young teachers leaving the training colleges for military service. Were it not for some such provision many of them would not be eligible to become contributors until they had received permanent appointments on their return to teaching duties, and their position in regard to length of service for superannuation purposes would then compare very unfavourably with that of their fellow students who were ineligible or unfit for military service and who received appointments on completion of their training-college courses.

The allowances granted during the year to contributors amounted to £4,716 9s., as compared with £6,449 8s. in 1916, a decrease of £1,732 19s. Although section 29 of the War Legislation Act, 1917, provides that during the currency of the war no allowance may be granted to a contributor unless his retirement has been approved by the Minister of Education, the large decrease was not due to this restrictive legislation, seeing that the Act referred to was not passed until the 31st October, 1917. Education Boards had prior to the passing of this legislation asked teachers eligible to retire on superannuation to remain in the service, and many of them, actuated by patriotic motives, did so. Practically the only retirements were those of teachers whose health had to a certain degree become impaired. Any contributor who is retained in the service by virtue of the provision referred to may elect to cease his contributions to the fund, and if he does so his allowance will be calculated, when his retirement actually takes place, as at the date on which he ceased his contributions.

It might have been expected from the reduction in the amount of allowances granted, and from the unusually large number of allowances which lapsed during the year by death or expiry (thirty-nine allowances amounting to £2,242 9s., as compared with twenty-one allowances amounting to £1,083 3s. in 1916) that there would have been an increase in the net revenue over that of 1916. As stated above, however, the net revenue for 1917 compared with that of 1916 shows a decrease of £1,689, which is no doubt accounted for by the increase in the amount which was refundable in the case of deceased contributors and to the falling-off in the number of new contributors.

*Statistics.*—The statements and accounts prescribed by regulations under the Act, together with other additional statements, are attached hereto.

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J. A. HANAN, Chairman.