

- (a.) A capitation grant at the rate of 3d. per head on the average attendance was paid to Boards for the purpose of supplying schools with supplementary continuous readers in sufficient numbers for class reading in P to S6 inclusive, and also for the free supply of class-books in necessitous cases or in cases where a newly entered pupil had already purchased elsewhere class-books different from those in use in the school. After provision was made for the supply of such books, the balance of the grant, if any, was spent on approved books suitable for individual reading in school or at home.
- (b.) Further to encourage the establishment and the satisfactory maintenance of school libraries provision is made for the payment of subsidies of £1 for £1 on moneys raised by voluntary contributions. In addition to this departmental subsidy a subsidy is payable by the Education Board under section 37 of the Education Act, but the Board is not required to pay a sum exceeding 3d. for each child in average attendance at a school, or exceeding £5 for any one school. The books purchased are to be suitable for individual reading in school or at home, and are to be approved by the Senior Inspector.

The complaints regarding the expense to which parents are put by reason of their having to purchase new books for their children when they move from one district to another are not so common as formerly, and there are good grounds for believing that the attention drawn by the Department to the provision that in these cases class-books must be supplied free has resulted in the relief of parents with respect to such charges. There are also similar grounds for believing the provision of the free supply of class-books in necessitous cases is being more generally complied with.

The question of making some further provision in the direction of supplying certain text-books free of cost is at present receiving the attention of the Government.

SUBSIDIES ON VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS.

In addition to the subsidies mentioned above with respect to school libraries, under section 159 of the Education Act subsidies of £1 for £1 are payable on voluntary contributions for many other school purposes prescribed by regulation. The total amount approved as subsidies in connection with public schools for the financial year ending 31st March last was £8,929 (as compared with £4,617 in 1918-19), showing that the annual expenditure is increasing as School Committees become more fully aware that any efforts they may make in the direction of providing funds for improving their schools and grounds are recognized by the payment of a Government subsidy. By this means many schools have been enabled to carry out desirable works somewhat beyond their own unaided efforts, and the extension of the provision to all public schools by the Act of 1914, instead of its being limited to district high schools as previously, has served as an excellent stimulus to self-help.

MEDICAL INSPECTION AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION.

The staff of officers engaged in school medical work at the end of 1919 had increased to ten School Medical Officers and fifteen school nurses, and since that date the staff has been still further augmented. The increased staff has made it possible to extend the work in many directions.

The number of schools visited in 1919 was 704, the number including all large primary schools and a certain proportion of small schools in country districts previously unreached by the School Medical Officers. The number of children completely examined was approximately 30,000, and, in addition, a much larger number were partially examined or examined specially for suspected defects. Part of the duty of the school nurse is to "follow up" the report to the parent of the Medical Officer by ascertaining what steps are being taken to obtain the required treatment, and, if necessary, by urging parents to take action. It is found that when circumstances permit and facilities are available a large proportion of the parents notified act on the advice of the School Medical Officer.