

No. 1.—EXTRACT FROM THE REPORT OF THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION.

PRIMARY EDUCATION.

NUMBER OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

(Tables A1 and B3.)

The number of public schools open at the end of 1919 was 2,400, as compared with 2,365 in 1918—an increase of 35, being for the most part in the number of very small schools. In the following table the schools are classified according to the yearly average attendance, and the total number of children at the schools in each grade is shown.

Grade of School.			Number of Schools.	Total Average Attendance.	Grade of School.			Number of Schools.	Total Average Attendance.
0.	(1-8)		185	1,123	VI B.	(441-480)		14	6,670
I.	(9-20)		721	10,410	VII A.	(481-520)		10	5,331
II.	(21-35)		490	12,712	VII B.	(521-560)		9	5,188
III A.	(36-80)		561	28,771	VII C.	(561-600)		12	7,024
III B.	(81-120)		131	12,617	VII D.	(601-640)		14	8,716
IV A.	(121-160)		46	6,433	VII E.	(641-680)		10	6,715
IV B.	(161-200)		46	8,195	VII F.	(681-720)		8	5,801
IV C.	(201-240)		27	6,143	VII G.	(721-760)		7	5,181
V A.	(241-280)		28	7,913	VII H.	(761-800)		3	2,259
V B.	(281-320)		25	7,660	VII I.	(801-840)		2	1,636
V C.	(321-360)		23	7,973	VII J.	(841-880)		1	840
V D.	(361-400)		13	4,967	VII K.	(881-920)		1	940
VI A.	(401-440)		13	5,636					

Total, 1919.. .. 2,400 schools.

„ 1918.. .. 2,365 „

Increase 35 „

For the number of schools in each education district classified according to grade, reference should be made to Table A1.

It will be observed that of 2,400 schools, 1,957 were in Grades 0-III A, having average attendances between 1 and 80, and of these 906 had averages ranging from 1 to 20.

Of 177,000 children, more than 24,000 are in sole-teacher schools with averages between 1 and 35, and 82,000 children are in schools with an average number of pupils of more than 280.

PUBLIC-SCHOOL BUILDINGS.

During the year ending 31st March, 1920, applications were received by the Department from Education Boards for grants for new public-school buildings, additions, residences, sites, &c., to a total amount of £496,153, as compared with £238,817 in 1918-19. This is apart from schools established in buildings for which no grant is made except by way of rent. The departmental expenditure for the year was £109,981, and at the end of the financial year the commitments totalled £308,088. Thirty-five new schools of varying sizes were erected, forty-seven were enlarged, and two were rebuilt; six residences were also erected and two were enlarged.

During the war the Education Boards restricted the applications for grants to cases that were regarded as of pressing urgency. The result was that in growing centres the school accommodation became overtaxed to a degree that could be justified only by the necessity for exercising the strictest economy in the expenditure of public funds. Where, under normal conditions, additional rooms would have been provided, the best use was made of the existing accommodation, or temporary provision for the increase in the attendance was made by renting such halls as were available; and where new schools were required every possible expedient was adopted to avoid the erection of buildings. These temporary arrangements were more or less unsatisfactory in character. The rented buildings were sometimes unlined, poorly lit, and otherwise unsuitable for educational purposes and for occupation by children.

With the close of the war, however, it was generally recognized that adequate financial provision should be made, not only for the erection of buildings in connec-