

PRIMARY EDUCATION.

NUMBER OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

(Tables A1 and B3 in E.-2.)

The number of public schools open at the end of 1920 was 2,437, as compared with 2,400 in 1919. 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)	176	1,057	VI.B. (441-480)	14	6,587
I. (9-20)	704	10,591	VII.A. (481-520)	12	5,974
II. (21-35)	539	14,858	VII.B. (521-560)	9	4,865
III.A. (36-80)	578	29,904	VII.C. (561-600)	14	8,157
III.B. (81-120)	129	12,415	VII.D. (601-640)	15	9,096
IV.A. (121-160)	52	8,166	VII.E. (641-680)	11	7,180
IV.B. (161-200)	41	7,605	VII.F. (681-720)	6	4,118
IV.C. (201-240)	24	5,829	VII.G. (721-760)	8	5,614
V.A. (241-280)	23	6,921	VII.H. (761-800)	3	2,981
V.B. (281-320)	27	8,220	VII.I. (801-840)	1	1,609
V.C. (321-360)	21	7,268	VII.J. (841-880)	1	810
V.D. (361-400)	19	7,023	VII.K. (881-920)	..	..
VI.A. (401-440)	9	3,947	VII.L. (921-960)	1	909

Total, 1920 2,437 schools.

„ 1919 2,400 „

Increase 37 „

For the number of schools in each education district classified according to grade, reference should be made to Table A1 in E.-2.

It will be observed that of 2,437 schools, 1,997 were in Grades 0-III.A, having average attendances between 1 and 80, and of these 880 had averages ranging from 1 to 20.

Of 181,704 children, 26,506 are in sole-teacher schools with averages between 1 and 35, and 84,358 children are in schools with an average number of pupils of more than 280.

PUBLIC-SCHOOL BUILDINGS.

The following table shows the growth of expenditure, &c., in connection with public-school buildings for the last five years:—

Financial Year.	Applications received.	Special Grants approved.	Expenditure.
	£	£	£
1913-14	..	..	69,123
1916-17	95,849	36,973	43,790
1917-18	129,202	66,750	47,106
1918-19	238,817	124,162	80,780
1919-20	496,153	319,225	109,981
1920-21	790,296	380,977	279,476

On the 1st April last the commitments—that is, special grants approved but unclaimed by Education Boards—amounted to £409,409. Most of the works for which grants have been approved are now well under way.

The high cost of erecting schools was considered by a conference of Education Board representatives in January, and all the evidence went to show that where the Boards employed their own staffs the work was cheaper and better than under the tender system. This has encouraged other Education Boards to employ direct labour, and the results have been satisfactory. The “cost plus fee” system of contracting was discussed also, and several Boards in a few instances have adopted it with advantage.