

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

Of the sixty-one additional schools open in 1921, twenty-seven were in Grade 0, having an average attendance of less than 9. Of the whole 2,498 schools, it will be observed that 906 had average attendances ranging from 1 to 20, and 2,036 had averages ranging from 1 to 80, so that the proportion of comparatively small schools is very great.

Of a total of 183,000 children, 25,000 are in sole-teacher schools with an attendance not exceeding 35, and 88,000 are in schools with an average attendance exceeding 280.

PUBLIC-SCHOOL BUILDINGS.

The following table shows expenditure, &c., in connection with public-school buildings for the last six 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
1921-22	..	..	..	152,335	72,615	328,228

The substantial reduction in the approved grants, as shown in the above table, is due to the fact that during the past year, owing to the financial situation, special grants for new buildings and sites were approved only in the most urgent cases, precedence being given to the needs of country districts. Rented halls were used as far as possible in lieu of erecting new schools or providing additional accommodation at existing schools, but in general the character of the accommodation in such rented buildings is not satisfactory, and the provision of permanent buildings cannot be indefinitely postponed. The expenditure of £328,228 had reference almost wholly to authorities that had been issued in previous years. As applications were received by the Department they were scheduled, and grants were made according to the order of urgency of the work. Education Boards, also recognizing the position, exercised a wise discretion and refrained from transmitting applications which, under more favourable financial conditions, would undoubtedly have been sent forward. The result was a marked falling-off in the applications received during the year. Even though consideration of many applications that came before the Department was postponed indefinitely, and the claims were struck off for the time being, those still before the Department on the 1st April last totalled £461,403, which may be taken as a measure of the work regarded as urgent. Under the Education Amendment Act of last session Education Boards' rebuilding funds can be expended on new works, and such Boards as have these funds immediately available are readily acquiescing in suggestions made for utilizing the moneys in connection with urgent works. To provide the cost of new works debentures or stock issued under the Education Purposes Loans Act were freely taken up in various parts of the Dominion.

The portable buildings designed by the Department, to which reference was made last year, have now been erected in several centres, and give general satisfaction both to the teachers and to the local school authorities. In a time of financial stress they have enabled the Department to avoid the immediate cost of expensive permanent additions to schools, and, as they can be erected beside existing buildings, they have also enabled the Department to postpone for the time being the erection of schools on new sites in connection with which would be involved considerable expense for work on the site, fencing, outbuildings, &c. Apart from their recognized utility in connection with primary schools, these buildings, which are constructed in sections, can be widely used in connection with secondary schools, technical schools, &c., for workshops, laboratories, and so on, not so much