

because of their cheapness, but because of the degree of elasticity they afford in modifying the accommodation according to changing educational needs. Sufficient margin of safety being allowed, it is unlikely that the class-rooms at present being erected will outlast their educational utility, but this cannot be claimed with any degree of certainty for workshops, &c., erected in permanent material, for it is more than probable that their structural life will far exceed their utility life owing to changes in ideals of instruction and to the desirability for substituting new and up-to-date equipment for that which from time to time becomes obsolete. In this respect the portable and extensible building may be regarded as providing 100 per cent. of elasticity, for, while the more permanent building can be remodelled from time to time only at considerable cost, and may even have to be abandoned altogether long before the end of its structural life, the portable building can be extended indefinitely or subdivided at comparatively small cost. Even if it has to be taken to pieces to provide a new building the sections can be again used without waste of material. Such a building may be regarded as providing what educationists and school architects are aiming at—a building whose utility life is equal to its structural life.

For some years it was difficult to erect school buildings except at excessive cost, and almost invariably additional sums had to be approved to meet the amount of the actual cost over what was regarded as a reasonable estimate. Latterly, however, the position has been much more satisfactory, and substantial savings on the grants have been effected. The reduced cost of building is particularly noticeable in those education districts where the Boards have their own workshops and their own constructional staffs. Profits under the tender system are eliminated, and, what is even more important from the educational point of view, the Boards' permanent men, being constantly engaged on school buildings, know exactly what is aimed at, and become skilful in regard to matters that are apparently unimportant from a structural point of view, but are of great importance in connection with the working of the school and the comfort and convenience of the pupils and teachers. The saving in cost is particularly noticeable where an existing building has to be altered to provide for additions, or in the process of remodelling. The Department considers that the maintenance of school buildings is undoubtedly work that should be carried out by permanent staffs. Of the nine Education Boards, six now widely employ their own staffs.

The programme for remodelling and rebuilding schools, which it was expected would now be well under way, has been necessarily postponed. Except in cases of extreme urgency, grants for rebuilding have not been approved, and remodelling has been authorized only when it has been necessary in connection with the urgent provision of additions. Where remodelling has been carried out the result has been most satisfactory, and has convinced local school authorities, who previously were insistent in their demands for entirely new schools, that, provided the materials are sound, it is a very bad building indeed that cannot be remodelled to advantage at a fraction of the cost of a new structure.

ROLL NUMBER.

(Tables B1 and B2 in E.—2.)

The number of children attending public schools in 1921, as shown by the average weekly roll number, was 202,944, the roll number at the end of the year being 207,357. The following are comparative figures for the last two years :—

—	Mean of Average Weekly Roll.		Roll Number at End of Year.	
	Including Second-ary Departments of District High Schools.	Excluding Second-ary Departments of District High Schools.	Including Second-ary Departments of District High Schools.	Excluding Second-ary Departments of District High Schools.
Year 1921	202,944	200,311	207,357	205,181
Year 1920	196,731	194,188	199,802	197,645
Increase in 1921 ..	6,213	6,123	7,555	7,536
Increase per cent. in 1921	3·2	3·2	3·8	3·8