

Finance.

In both countries expenditure on education is, in the main, a matter for the locality. The usual procedure is to raise money for capital expenditure by the issue of bonds, while maintenance charges are met by rates. In both Canada and the United States I was astonished to see how willingly a progressive community will tax itself for education. Windsor, a town in Ontario of some thirty thousand inhabitants, has recently built two very fine elementary schools in brick at a cost of £125,000 each, and the people there are now arranging for the erection of a technical high school to cost about £150,000. Cleveland, a city in Ohio of about eight hundred thousand inhabitants, has authorized a loan of £4,500,000 for the erection of school buildings. Detroit, a slightly larger city in Michigan, has authorized a loan of equal amount for a similar purpose. Sacramento, a town of about the size of Dunedin, has raised and spent one loan of £850,000, and is now proposing to raise another for a similar amount. Almost side by side with these progressive districts are to be found others where the schools are old, badly suited to their purpose, and, in rural districts, utterly poor. Rates levied for education naturally vary greatly in amount in different localities. In Toronto, property is assessed for the purpose of municipal taxation at about 80 per cent. of its selling-value; the total rates for the current year are at the rate of $3\frac{3}{10}$ per cent. on this assessed value. Of this amount one-third is for education. In Cleveland, and also in Rochester, one-half of the total municipal tax is spent on education.

Compulsory Age.

In Ontario, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan, education is free between the ages of five and twenty-one. In British Columbia accommodation must be provided for all between five and sixteen. In Ontario attendance is compulsory between eight and fourteen, children between five and eight may attend, but if they do their attendance must be full time. By a law which came into force this year in Ontario, adolescents who have not attained to the matriculation standard must attend school until they are sixteen. In case of necessity compelling such adolescents to go to work, exemption from full-time attendance is granted, but in this case they must attend school part-time for at least 400 hours per annum. The Act also provides that adolescents from sixteen to eighteen years of age must attend school part-time for 320 hours per annum, but this last provision has not yet been put into operation. In most of the States that I visited attendance is compulsory to fifteen or sixteen.

Elementary Education.

Kindergarten.—I saw many good kindergarten classes. The equipment was generally better and more complete than with us, but in my opinion the teaching given and the methods employed were in no way better than what may be seen in our own country.

THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS.

I took every opportunity of visiting the elementary schools and of observing the standard of attainment reached in the various subjects taught. In Ontario a fairly uniform standard is secured. This is due to the fact that Ontario has a system of inspection much the same as our own, and entrance to the secondary school depends in the main upon passing a written examination at the end of the Eighth Grade (their Eighth Grade = our Standard VI). The standard set in this examination is, I think, rather easier than that required in our free-place examination. I enclose for your information a recent set of questions. [Not printed.]

In the rural schools of Ontario the work is not, as a rule, so good. The weakness is due to several reasons:—

- (1.) In their distinctly local system the salary is largely a matter for the locality, and the pay offered, in many cases, has been insufficient to attract efficient teachers. (The Ontario Government has recently increased the subsidy to rural schools, with the result that salaries have been raised from £200 and £250 per annum to £300 and even to £375 per annum).
- (2.) Staffing is not fixed by regulation as with us. In one rural school that I visited I saw a teacher struggling unaided with fifty-three pupils in all grades.
- (3.) There is no security of tenure. In the rural districts teachers are engaged from year to year. I went into a number of country schools, but in only one had the teacher been at work for more than one year.
- (4.) Poor attendance. Owing to the severity of the winter the attendance is poor. The average attendance for the schools of Ontario for 1919 was only 65 per cent., as against about 90 per cent. with us.
- (5.) The very long summer vacation. The schools close for about twelve weeks. I think this too long, and I feel sure that the school-work suffers in consequence.

I consider that our primary schools reach a distinctly higher standard in academic work than do the corresponding schools of the United States. Much of the work that I saw in the upper classes there was, from our point of view, slipshod, slovenly, and inaccurate. (There were, of course, some notable exceptions, but that was the general impression left on my mind.) In one large city school in New York, where 98 per cent. of the children were foreigners who on admission were unable to speak a word of English, I was much struck with the ease and expression with which primer children, only a few weeks at school, read. The teachers gave the credit to a new series of books they were using in which the work was largely based on dialogue and dramatization. I secured a set of these readers, also a teacher's manual in which the system is explained. With the co-operation of the infant-mistress at Richmond Road School, I hope to make trial of it at an early date.