

SCHOOL-BOOKS, STATIONERY, AND MATERIAL.

Extensive inquiries concerning the practice of education authorities in regard to the provision of school-books, stationery, and material show that almost everywhere these are supplied free to all pupils in elementary, senior, central, and special schools. It is usual for secondary and technical school pupils to provide their own books except in necessitous cases.

London allows expenditure as follows: Central schools, 12s. to 13s. per pupil per annum; senior schools, 6s. 6d. per pupil per annum; junior schools, 4s. 6d. per pupil per annum; infants, 2s. 6d. per pupil per annum—for books, stationery, and consumable material.

Nottingham spends 8s. 6d. per pupil in average attendance in elementary schools on books, stationery, apparatus, and equipment.

The *Essex* Education Committee makes to each school an annual capitation allowance for school books, apparatus, and equipment as follows: Senior schools, 7s. per unit; junior schools, 4s. per unit; junior and infant schools, 3s. 6d. per unit; infant schools, 3s. per unit; all-standard schools, 5s. per unit. In addition, there is an allowance of 4d. per head for physical-training and sports apparatus and 3d. per head for pictures. In the case of new schools a special allowance based on the proposed school accommodation of £1 per place for the first year and 10s. per place for the second year is allowed. For needlework materials teachers are allowed to make two requisitions each year. The normal capitation allowance is—Infant schools, 8d. per head per requisition for all girls; junior and all-standard schools, 1s. per head per requisition for all girls; senior schools, 1s. 4d. per head per requisition for all girls. An additional allowance up to 50 per cent. of the cost of materials purchased is made for materials used for practice work and unavoidable wastage.

East Suffolk allows for pupils over 10½ years of age 5s. 6d. per head and for pupils under 10½ years of age 4s. per head for books, stationery, handwork material, and needlework material.

I have to recommend that favourable consideration be given to the supply of free school-books, stationery, and material in primary and intermediate schools.

To the best of my knowledge very few education authorities publish their own school-books or issue an exclusive authorized list of school text-books.

“Each department of a London elementary school is allowed to requisition for books, apparatus, and consumable materials up to an allowance fixed on a *per capita* basis, and each head teacher is free to decide how much of this allowance shall be devoted to books, and to choose the particular books to be used in the department, provided that the books are included in the requisition list.”

This represents the position generally throughout England and Scotland.

The Year-Book of Education for 1934 shows that in—

New South Wales teachers in primary schools have free choice in selecting text-books. An approved list is supplied, but no objection is made to other text-books unless certain defects have been specially noted.

Queensland: Certain text-books are definitely prescribed for use in schools, both primary and secondary. A list of additional suitable books which may be used at their discretion is provided by the Department, to which copies intended for consideration should be sent.

(NOTE.—This may not be the position now.)

South Australia: In primary schools the teachers are limited to text-books named in the course of instruction supplied by the Education Department at the instigation of the Director of Education.

Tasmania: Suitable books are recommended in the course of instruction, but teachers are encouraged to use any books that appeal to them as being suited to the subject in hand.

Victoria: A certain degree of freedom is allowed, but teachers are expected to make their selection from the suggested list published each year.

Western Australia: In the primary schools teachers have freedom in selecting text-books (other than prescribed reading-books) with the approval of their district inspectors.

Almost universally, the practice is for the education authority to prepare a list of approved books from which the teachers select those which they consider most suitable for the requirements of their pupils. The books belong to the school, and must be left there when the pupil leaves school or transfers to another school.

Educationists consider that we are wrong in limiting our pupils to one text-book in a subject.

The issue of a short authorized list in 1923 in New Zealand was brought about by complaints made by parents against the expense imposed on them by frequent changes of school-books, the changes being due to the action of the teachers, or to pupils transferring from one school to another.

Reporting last year to the Hon. the Ministers of Education and Finance of British Columbia, the Revision Committee of the Education Finance and Administration Committee said:—

“We would also point out that the system sometimes recommended of having *all* text-books printed by the Government has proved a failure wherever it has been tried. There is a limited field only where such a policy could be applied.”

The present arrangements made by the New Zealand Government in regard to primary-school text-books expires in December, 1937, and it will be necessary for the Government to consider almost immediately whether it will—

- (1) Retain the authorized list in its present form; or
- (2) Issue a longer list from which teachers may choose; or
- (3) Supply free text-books to primary and intermediate school pupils, leaving the teachers free to choose from a list approved by the Department.