

one and a half to two hours weekly, inasmuch as they provide that schools may, at this stage, exercise the option of deleting either history or science from the courses. Finally, for Sixth Form pupils, English and physical training are the only compulsory subjects.

The Intermediate and School Certificate Examinations, the only school examinations controlled by the Department, other than those for special purposes, exert no restrictive influence. In the former the only compulsory subjects are English, arithmetic or practical mathematics, and hand-writing. In the latter the only compulsory subject is English. Moreover, in the Intermediate Examination pupils may be examined in subjects included in actual courses of instruction given to pupils, but not listed in the examination schedule, the examination in these alternative subjects being based upon prescriptions supplied by the school itself and approved for the purpose. The possibilities in this direction are perhaps overlooked by some teachers.

The new intermediate syllabus in history, which was gazetted during the year, was generally welcomed by teachers. Some schools have already begun courageously to base their teaching upon it, while others have been content to plan a reorganization of their courses in history for next year.

Similar movements have been afoot for some little time past to revise somewhat the content of secondary-school courses in French and in science. In regard to French there is a growing body of opinion among teachers in favour of giving a new orientation to the teaching, so that pupils will attempt more actual reading and comprehension of French texts than is the general rule at present. In science the claims of biology as a suitable element for inclusion in the school syllabus are coming to be more widely recognized among teachers. It is considered, however, that any rearrangement of the science syllabus should preferably be by easy development from the existing courses. Neither of these desires has yet been brought to fruition, but in both cases considerable preliminary work has been done.

STAFFING.

The greatest advance during the year in regard to staffing conditions has been the removal of the so-called D bar. Reference to this has been made in previous reports, and it has been pointed out that, while teachers on the staffs of technical high schools or of combined schools have been able, if their grading warranted it, to proceed by regular stages to a salary corresponding to the maximum salary of the C grade, secondary-school teachers, even when graded C or higher, could not proceed beyond the maximum salary of the D grade unless they were fortunate enough to be appointed to a C grade position. The younger secondary-school teachers have long chafed at this restriction, and in the last few years a number have, in consequence, transferred to the technical service. As a result of a recent amendment to the regulations any teacher in a D grade position, who is graded C or higher, may now proceed by annual increments to the maximum salary of the C grade, and is thus put on an equality with a teacher of similar qualifications, efficiency, and service employed in a technical high school or in a combined school.

The effect of this amendment upon the staffing of the country secondary schools has yet to be determined. Some of these have at times found it difficult to secure teachers for C grade positions, and this difficulty is not likely to be decreased now that a teacher may secure a C grade salary without transfer. A teacher receiving a salary well below the maximum of the D grade may, however, receive rapid promotion by appointment to a C grade position elsewhere, and it is possible that, because of this, little greater difficulty will be experienced by secondary schools away from the larger towns than at present.

INCREASED ALLOWANCES TO PUPILS AND TO SCHOOLS.

Among recent educational reforms is the restoration or extension of various facilities for pupils and schools. Not only has restoration been made of the provision of free text-books, in necessitous cases, but further assistance has been given to both town and country children in attendance at post-primary schools by providing grants towards their conveyance or board. Grants for conveyance are now made where the pupil's home is over three miles from the school by the shortest route, and also where the pupil is conveyed by ferry boat or launch. In the case of a pupil using a horse where roads are non-existent or unsuitable for wheeled traffic, two-thirds of the recognized rates are granted. Where there is no means of daily transport by rail or otherwise, a grant is made towards the board of those country children, who, in order to continue their post-primary education, are obliged to live away from home.

It is pleasing to note also that the capitation grant for incidental expenses, which had been steadily cut during the depression, has now been restored to approximately what it was before economy measures became necessary in 1931. During the last few years the teaching in manual and science classes has been handicapped by the reduction in the grant towards the cost of materials, but the old capitation has now been restored.

With the restoration of the grant for incidental expenses and with the more liberal provision for materials in manual and science classes, the neglected state of the school libraries is the more noticeable, and their rehabilitation becomes an urgent question. It is agreed that libraries are part of the equipment of teaching; but, though an adequate supply of test-tubes is assured in our laboratories, in some schools there is no library, and in others a meagre collection of antiquated books is housed in some class-room or basement. With the return of prosperity it is hoped that there will be forthcoming, in the near future, funds both for the creation of new libraries and for additions to the old.