

If to this is added the amount derived by Secondary-school Boards and University College Councils from reserves vested in them—about £78,100—the total expenditure from public sources is approximately £3,349,900, as compared with £3,286,000 in 1922–23.

The total expenditure has grown from £1,233,328 in 1911–12 to £3,271,781 in 1923–24, or an increase of 166 per cent., whilst the total cost of education for the current year is estimated at £3,351,000.

In 1911 the average salary for an adult primary-school teacher was only £160, but the salaries were increased by the 1914 Act, and were subsequently further increased until the average now is £268, or 67 per cent. higher.

In the secondary scale the average salary of principals in 1911 was £464, and that of assistants only £204. First by increasing the capitation grant, and afterwards by providing a Dominion scale of salaries, these averages were increased to £636 and £315, while similar provision has been made for improving the salaries of technical teachers.

The cost of education mounts up as the school population increases and extended use is made of the privileges of free secondary and higher education. While it is a matter for satisfaction that the number of children taking post-primary courses in our high schools is thus increasing, it is a question whether the present system does not tend rather to induce young people to follow a line of education and training that has a bias towards the professional and clerical, to the disadvantage of practical agricultural and industrial pursuits. The Department is giving its attention to this problem with the view of evolving a provision which should give a sound post-primary education to the pupils who do not go on to the University or the professions.

The large sum of £1,993,985 has been expended since 1918–19 in meeting the pressing demand for school buildings, and suitable provision is being made for continued progress in this important connection.

DEFENCE.

The expenditure out of the Consolidated Fund for defence, including ordnance services, aviation, and the maintenance and training of the Territorial Force, for the year ended 31st March, 1924, amounted to £348,632, or £27,722 less than the amount appropriated.

NAVAL DEFENCE.

The expenditure on naval defence for the financial year ended 31st March, 1924, amounted to £374,966, made up as follows:—

Permanent charges—

Naval Defence Act, 1909—H.M.S. "New Zealand"—	£	£
Interest	£78,995	
Repayment of funded debt	10,248	
		89,243

Annual appropriation—

Vote, Naval defence		285,723
		£374,966

The estimates for the current year have been framed with a view to continuing as far as possible the policy embarked on by the Dominion. The total net expenditure for the Naval defence vote, 1924–25, is estimated at £330,465.

H.M.S. "Chatham" is being relieved by H.M.S. "Dunedin," a more modern oil-burning cruiser; and provision will require to be made for the entry and training of the young men who eventually will be required to man the second light cruiser.

The sum of £16,500 has been inserted in the estimates for the hire and upkeep of the oiler "Nucula," which has been provided by the Admiralty, this ship now being a necessity with an oil-burning cruiser on the station. It is also proposed to proceed with the erection, at a cost of £24,000, of two oil-fuel tanks, one of which was approved last year, but on which no money has been expended.

The contribution provided for the naval base at Singapore in 1923–24 was not expended, and, owing to the decision of the Imperial Government to incur no further expenditure on the scheme, an appropriation will not be required this year for the purpose; but if Parliament approves, a similar amount may be applied towards the cost of the second light cruiser recommended by the Admiralty.