

## REPORT.

### I. INTRODUCTORY AND GENERAL.

FOLLOWING on the change of Government I assumed control of the Department of Education on the 6th December, 1935. It will be apparent, therefore, that the major portion of the work for the year under review was carried out under the direction of my predecessor, to whom I wish to pay a tribute for his services to education.

In all branches of the Education service of the Dominion the teachers rank high in respect of training and academic status, and it is with pleasure I am able to record that the pupils are receiving their education from highly qualified teachers whose loyalty and devotion to duty during the last four years, under conditions rendered particularly trying by enforced economies, are worthy of all praise.

During the year 1935 the scheme of rationing work for teachers was continued, but owing to the gradual absorption into permanent positions of the teachers employed under the scheme it was found possible to increase the allowances paid to £104 10s. per annum as from the 1st August, and then by  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., in common with the increase in the salaries of public servants, pursuant to the provisions of the Finance Act, 1935, making the rate £112 7s. per annum. Some of the rationed teachers were employed as relieving teachers at the rate of £142 9s. per annum, with a boarding-allowance of £36 per annum where necessary.

While the necessity for the rationing scheme is to be deplored, it was at least some contribution towards the solution of a difficult problem arising out of the drastic economies that had been imposed on the Education service. In other directions, also, some amelioration of the conditions due to these economies was found possible.

Towards the end of the year a partial restoration of the grants formerly made towards the support of free kindergartens was authorized. A grant on a basis somewhat lower than that formerly enjoyed was made for the maintenance of school and class libraries.

The supply of handwork material to primary schools was resumed during the year, about half the usual amounts being distributed. Extension of manual-training services in connection with primary schools, which had been nearly stationary for some years, was encouraged, especially by the provision of transport to enable children in small schools to attend manual-training centres.

Reports indicate that the standard and efficiency of instruction and the standard of attainment of the pupils in the primary and post-primary schools has been well maintained during the period under review.

The recently instituted School Certificate Examination was held for a second time in conjunction with the University Entrance Examination. A slight increase was recorded in the number of candidates, and there is reason to believe that the certificate will become firmly established in public estimation.

The intermediate schools and intermediate departments have done excellent work during the year. A marked feature of these schools and departments is the enthusiastic support which they receive from the parents of the pupils in attendance. No new intermediate schools were established during the year and no large consolidations of schools were attempted, but several schemes were investigated and much consideration was given to problems of conveyance, which are peculiarly difficult in a country so mountainous and so sparsely populated as the Dominion. It is hoped, nevertheless, to make substantial progress towards giving country children educational facilities equal to those enjoyed by the town child.

In this connection the Correspondence School deserves special mention. Judged by the increasing roll, by the interest shown in its activities by the parents, and by the examination results of its pupils it is continuing to function with commendable efficiency.