

The average attendance of the school is at present such an important matter, both to committees and teachers, that young children are rushed into school as soon as they turn five, in order that they may swell the roll and raise the grade of the school or keep it from falling; and so long as payments continue to be based upon average attendance so long will this difficulty continue, which is created by the haphazard admission of beginners at any time they choose to come. The multiplication of classes in the primer departments caused by this very fact is a great source of retardation to the general work of the school. Perhaps the most serious trouble confronting many of the teachers in certain parts of the district is that created by the employment of children in dairying and other farm occupations, to such an extent as to render them physically unable to take intelligent and effective interest in their school-work. It is not against the welfare of children that they should have some regular employment at home in addition to their school duties; we believe that it is right and proper that they should. It is of excessive labour we complain, and a careful investigation into the circumstances of some of the schools, especially in our dairying districts, leads us to protest strongly against what amounts to a gross injustice to many of our growing boys and girls, and indirectly to the community at large. As we have pointed out elsewhere it is not always, nor even frequently, that the necessitous circumstances of the parents give rise to the trouble. More often we believe the cause is greed of gain, and a culpable ignorance of the needs and demands of the growing body. Here is a table showing the amount of work and the hours of employment of the children of one of your country schools. It is only one case in many. The table speaks for itself, and we trust it may have the effect of arresting what seems to be a growing tendency with us—viz., the employment of children at tasks beyond their strength at a time when they should be reserved for such education as the State offers them.

*List of Milkers.*

Age of Scholar.			Time of Rising.	Number of Cows, Night and Morning.	Time occupied by Two Milking.
Yrs. mos.			A.m.		
14	9	...	4.40	12	Four to five hours.
16	1	...	4.40	9	"
15	10	...	4.15	12	"
15	3	...	5	10	Three to four hours.
13	6	...	5.30	9	Four to five hours.
15	0	...	5.30	10	"
11	8	...	4.45	10	"
8	6	...	5	10	"
10	6	...	5	10	"
7	6	...	5	7	"
7	9	...	5	6	"
9	7	...	4.45	5	"
15	2	...	5	12	"
13	11	...	4.30	12	"
11	2	...	5	9	"
12	9	...	4.30	11	"
10	0	...	4.30	10	"
10	2	...	5	7	"
11	9	...	4	15	Five hours.
11	4	...	6	7	Three hours.

It needs no remark of ours to point out the hardship which this excessive homework imposes upon the teachers. What is the remedy for this? That is the question.

PRIMER DEPARTMENT.—In the Primer department notable progress has been made in many directions. The introduction of subjects for hand and eye training has dealt a death-blow at the stepped gallery, whose only recommendation was its capacity for accommodating large numbers. We have seen as many as a hundred children packed in one of these great stairways in a space, which by all the recognised laws of hygiene should not have accommodated more than forty or fifty. A few still survive as those who have outlived their age and generation; but if the present policy of the Board continues, as we have little doubt it will, their days are surely numbered. Further, the introduction of manual training has resulted in the pupils of the lower classes taking a greater interest in their work. Let us trust it will mean a complete and effective arrest of that dull, prosaic, stolid, unresponsive attitude which was so readily developed under a régime in which the work of the two lower grades consisted largely in an alternation between writing and figuring, with an occasional song thrown in to vary the monotony. Even to-day there are those who do not sufficiently realise the importance of making the work of the little ones as varied and active as possible. The little ones must be active. It is thus and only thus that they can possibly attain their proper development. To put an undue strain on them is to arrest their mental growth. The teacher's aim is not to restrict, but to develop; to keep mind and body profitably employed, and by varied occupation to impart sufficient interest in the work to insure that the body is working with the mind and the mind controlling the body. The teacher's task here is an extremely difficult one, owing to the diversity of the natures of the pupils. Where one will find steady employment for fifteen minutes, another exhausts all the possibilities of the occupation in less than five. What to do with him during the remaining portion of his period is just the problem; it is here that the difference between the skilful and the unskilful teacher becomes manifest. In the