INTRODUCTION.

In view of the fact that education is one of the most powerful influences that mould the national life of the community no review of the work of the Education Department of the past year would be complete without some reference to education in its special relation to the experiences of the war period and to the changes in social, industrial, and national life which are certain to result from the crucial test to which national life and efficiency have been subjected.

Messages from other Countries.

The importance of this view of the relation of education to national progress is emphasized by the following utterances by high authorities in the United States, France, and England:—

United States.—"Every public officer entrusted with the support of public schools should know that Europe's lesson to the United States as a result of the war is to keep the schools going; to make education during and after the war better and more effective than it has ever been. There are before us now just two matters of supreme importance: To win the war for freedom, democracy, and peace, and to fit our schools and our children for life and citizenship in the new era which the war is bringing in."—(P. P. Claxton, Commissioner.)

France.—"Do not let the needs of the hour, however demanding, or its burdens, however heavy, or its perils, however threatening, or its sorrows, however heart-breaking, make you unmindful of the defence of to-morrow, of those disciplines through which the individual may have freedom, through which an efficient democracy is possible, through which the institutions of civilization can be perpetuated and strengthened. Conserve, endure taxation and privation, suffer and sacrifice, to assure to those whom you have brought into the world that it shall be not only a safe but a happy place for them."—(France's message, reported by John H. Finley, Commissioner of Education of New York State, in his report on French schools in war-time.)

England.—"At the beginning of the war, when first the shortage of labour became apparent, a raid was made upon the schools—a great raid, a successful raid, a raid started by a large body of unreflecting opinion. The result of that raid upon the schools has been that hundreds of thousands of children in this country have been prematurely withdrawn from school, and have suffered an irreparable damage, a damage which it will be quite impossible for us hereafter adequately to repair. That is a very grave and distressing symptom."—(H. A. L. Fisher, President of the English Board of Education.)

"Any inquiry into education at the present juncture is big with the issues of national fate. In the great work of reconstruction which lies ahead there are aims to be set before us which will try, no less searchingly than war itself, the temper and enduring qualities of our race; and in the realization of each and all of these, education, with its stimulus and discipline, must be our stand-by. . . . These are tasks for a nation of trained character and robust physique, a nation alert to the things of the spirit, reverential of knowledge, reverential of its teachers, and generous in its estimate of what the production and maintenance of good teachers inevitably cost."—(From the report to the British Parliament in 1917 by the Committee on Juvenile Education in relation to Employment after the War.)

No doubt such appreciations of the vital relation between education and national strength have been expressed on previous occasions, and, as a rule, have been accorded a general even if somewhat indiscriminating acceptance. The deplorable fact is that, even when the highest appreciation of the value of education has been expressed, the amount of practical assistance, interest, and support accorded to it, in this as in other States, falls lamentably short of the high expectations such appreciation has naturally aroused. This is the more to be wondered at since education is of special and essential value to every individual, parental, social, industrial, moral, and national interest.