

No. 1.

EXTRACT FROM THE REPORT OF THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION.

TECHNICAL EDUCATION.

GENERAL.

The year 1920 has been marked mainly by changes of an administrative character. Up till last year the main source of revenue of technical schools and classes was derived from capitation payments made by Government on the hour attendances of pupils. This method had already broken down to some extent, since in the case of technical high schools, distinguished from day technical schools by no real difference of purpose or organization, a method of capitation payments was adopted based on the year as an attendance unit, and similar to that obtaining in the case of secondary schools. The capitation system, which doubtless has considerable advantages in countries where a substantial proportion of the total cost is provided locally, is not well suited to the case of this Dominion, in which practically the whole of the net cost is borne by the Government. As in the case of secondary schools, one result of the system was that each Board of Managers or controlling authority had its own method of fixing the salaries of instructors, and made its own conditions as to their employment. There was in consequence some variety of treatment under different Boards. For this variety there has been substituted a Dominion system of classification of technical-school teachers and manual-training instructors, and a corresponding system of payment of salaries. As salaries constitute by far the largest item in the expenditure of Boards, the introduction of a Dominion classification of technical-school teachers practically involved the abolition of capitation and the substitution of a more direct means of providing for the cost of technical education.

In framing regulations to give effect to the provisions to this end of the Education Amendment Act, 1920, care was taken to avoid, as far as possible, any alteration in the powers of controlling authorities and Boards of Managers in respect of the selection and control of the staffs of their schools. As, however, the staffing of any school had previously been limited only by the capitation available for the payment of salaries, it was necessary to specify in the new regulations the maximum staffing which could be regarded as permissible in view of all the factors, financial and educational, which entered into the question. The same rules of staffing were adopted for technical high schools as for other secondary schools. From the point of view of educational efficiency the resulting size of class is in many instances too large. It is very doubtful, however, if, with the money available, smaller classes under a larger number of teachers would be found to do better work. In fact, the difficulty experienced in getting men and women to enter the service of Technical Boards from office or workshop indicates that the salaries are not at the present time too high as compared with emoluments paid in other callings.

The abolition of capitation payments involved making direct provision for the incidental expenses incurred by Technical School Boards and controlling authorities in connection with the schools, including supervision in those cases in which the appointment of a full-time director was not considered necessary. The allowance for incidental expenses for any school or class was made proportional to the total salaries paid by the Department for that school or class. In this way the different schools receive fairly uniform treatment, and on the average the payments made are sufficient to meet legitimate expenses on the same scale as heretofore, though in one or two cases, where incidental expenses had previously been much higher than the average, some little difficulty might be felt.

A small beginning was also made in the year 1920 in the direction of the training of young people in trade and commerce for technical-school teaching. Regulations were issued providing for the appointment of student-teachers in technical schools, and for their training in methods of teaching and in subjects