

7. In all this there is no ground for apprehension, and but little cause for regret. Some of the weaker schools, which possessed little vitality independent of the Government grant, have been closed; while a more careful classification has shown that some schools were unable to maintain the standard under which they were previously ranked. But the colleges and higher English schools at one end of the scale, and the primary schools at the other, have in general stood the test of financial reductions in a manner which shows the soundness of the basis upon which they are established. The lesson to be deduced from the experience of the year appears to be that the middle schools are the weakest part of our educational system, and that special efforts should be made to strengthen and improve them.

8. The favourable inference which may be drawn from these returns is confirmed by an examination of the figures which show the proportion of the total educational expenditure contributed by Government and by the people themselves. Including the charges of the Medical College and schools, which are not shown in the Education Budget, the total expenditure on organized education was Rs. 42,34,000, of which Rs. 22,52,000 were paid by Government. In the previous year the Government contribution was Rs. 24,03,000, and the total expenditure Rs. 41,89,000. An increase of nearly half a lakh of rupees in the total expenditure, combined with a decrease of more than a lakh and a half in the payments by Government, shows that during the year the private funds expended upon education increased by about two lakhs of rupees. The Government share of educational expenditure has decreased during the year from 57 to 53 per cent., and this decrease in the rate is found in the schools of every class. The contributions from the public were Rs. 16,68,000 in 1874-75, Rs. 17,86,000 in 1875-76, and Rs. 19,82,000 in 1876-77. These figures appear to the Lieutenant-Governor to afford a convincing proof that the people are willing not merely to accept the instruction imparted in our schools, but to take their share in supporting it; and it is especially satisfactory to find that, in a year in which the Government was compelled to enforce measures of the strictest economy, the schools suffered no pecuniary loss, the deficiency being supplied, and more than supplied, by increased contributions from the public.

9. The primary schools supported or aided by Government showed a decrease during the year of nearly 1,000 schools and 46,000 pupils. But this decrease is owing, as has already been explained, to the elevation of about 1,300 of the best primary schools to the intermediate class. There has therefore been a real increase of about 300 schools; and as it appears that 1,500 pathsalas have been newly brought on the returns in the two districts of Balasore and Midnapore, it follows that about 1,200 schools have disappeared in other districts. Some of these continue to exist as unaided schools, but it is to be feared that the greater number have been closed. The unaided schools brought under inspection have increased from 2,043 schools with 43,714 pupils to 5,282 schools with 96,859 pupils. In the whole number of schools aided from the primary fund there are above 338,000 pupils, of whom it is estimated that about two-thirds, or 225,000, are in the lowest stage of instruction; 110,000 are able to read, write, and understand easy sentences out of a book, while at least 3,000 have reached a higher stage than this.

10. The report contains some suggestive and interesting paragraphs on the character of the instruction imparted in the indigenous schools of the country, the effect of the impulse given to primary education by the orders of 1872, the further degree of success which may reasonably be hoped for, and the dangers which have to be guarded against in extending and developing the present system. Such questions as these do not admit of proper and sufficient discussion within the limits of a Resolution, and the Lieutenant-Governor, while expressing his general concurrence in the Director's views, would rather commend these paragraphs to the perusal of those interested in the subject, than attempt to enter upon a detailed examination of the facts and arguments advanced in them.

11. Some remarks, however, appear to be called for upon the tendency which exists in some districts to raise the pathsalas to a standard unsuited to

the requirements of those classes of the people for whom these schools were originally intended. Jessore, Moorshedabad, and Burdwan are noticed in the report as districts in which this tendency is specially conspicuous. It must be distinctly understood that it is not the policy of the Government to convert the pathsalas into cheap middle schools; and that the success of a pathsala is to be tested, not by the proficiency of the three or four boys who go up for the scholarship examination, but by the average progress of the general body of pupils.

12. The adoption of a system of payment by results is the best means of securing this end, while at the same time it allows a larger number of schools to be aided from the district grant. It is therefore satisfactory to find that this system, in one form or another, is now being very generally introduced. In some districts the plan adopted is that of rewards after examination; in others, that of the payment of remuneration according to the classification of schools; in others, again, the payment is made to depend on the result of the inspecting officer's report. In several of the Behar districts the supervision of the village punchayets has been employed with very successful results. The Lieutenant-Governor would by no means desire to pass any orders tending to reduce these diversities of practice to one uniform standard. It is for the local officers to determine, in consultation with the circle inspectors, the system best adapted to the conditions and requirements of their respective districts. The present report affords abundant evidence of the attention which District Magistrates have devoted to the subject. The Magistrate of Bankoora, Mr. Larminie, deserves honourable mention for the elaboration of a scheme under which Bankoora has a larger proportion of school-going children to population than any other district in Bengal. The system, however, though it works admirably in Bankoora, is inapplicable to a large district. The plan originated by Mr. Harrison in Midnapore has continued to give excellent results during the year, and has been successfully introduced into the Balasore district. In the 24-Pergunnahs Mr. Wilson has adopted a system, based upon a scheme of the late Mr. Woodrow, of rewards for the attainment of certain educational standards. The Magistrates of Noakholly and Balasore, and the Deputy Commissioner of Manbhoom, have exerted themselves in various ways for the promotion of primary education, and the differences of system which prevail in these and in many other districts are really a measure of the intelligent appreciation given by the respective officers to the varying circumstances of their districts and to the special difficulties which have to be overcome.

13. The standard for the primary scholarship examination was considerably raised this year, and the test is said to have been very strictly enforced. In all, 3,110 schools sent up 11,462 candidates, and of these 5,246 passed and 386 obtained scholarships, the rest receiving certificates of merit according to their proficiency. It is noticeable that this year girls competed for this scholarship for the first time, and that in Jessore one girl obtained a scholarship, while in Tipperah three girls passed and one obtained a scholarship, standing first on the whole list. In Bhagulpore the scholarships appear to have been awarded without examination, a circumstance which calls for explanation from the Commissioner, as the omission to hold an examination in that district was noticed in the Resolution upon last year's report. On the whole, the Director thinks it is certain that the results of the year show a great advance. But there seems some reason to fear that these scholarships, which were intended to assist gifted boys of the lowest social classes in prosecuting their studies to a higher standard, are in many cases awarded to candidates who were simply attached to the pathsalas by the prospect of a scholarship, and who would otherwise have studied in a middle school. It is thought worthy of special notice that in one case the son of a weaver, and in another case the son of a milkman, obtained a scholarship; whereas instances of this kind should have been the rule, and not the exception. The Director will be invited to consider whether any regulations can be devised to restrict a practice which tends to defeat the object which the Government had in view in establishing these rewards.