

were regularly kept and produced for the inspection of the House of Commons, and were classified and codified as was at present the case. Every member of that House was equally anxious to carry out the end aimed at, and the only difference was as to the means. It was not for him to say that the existing system of education was the only one possible in this country. In such a centralized system, what was gained in strength and efficiency was certainly lost in want of proper control over local expenditure, and of that active interest which everybody took in works which were immediately and solely the result of local efforts. But could this more efficient and economical system be obtained? Was it possible to avoid that duplication of grants and of machinery, and that perhaps rather wasteful application of public money, which resulted from the use of religious denominational agency? Other nations might get rid of the difficulty by recognizing but one form of religion, and America by recognizing none; but in this country he did not see how they could dispense with the religious machinery now made available. With regard to the present expenditure, he had heard it said that the terms of the minute of Council, in distributing the education grants, led to the neglect of the poor districts throughout the country, while the rich obtained an undue proportion of aid. He believed a more just complaint was that these grants did not meet the wants of the remote agricultural districts; but he believed that they must be content to put up with that smaller success which was so unsatisfactory to those who were sanguine in their views upon national education. They must be content with a low age and short attendance from the pupils in the country schools. It was certainly lamentable to hear, as they did from the School Inspector of the Northern Counties, that seven-tenths of the grants in his district went to the education of children under ten years of age; but any attempt to keep the children of the labouring classes under intellectual culture after the very earliest age at which they could earn their living, would be as arbitrary and improper as it would be to keep the boys of Eton and Harrow at spade labour. (Hear, hear.) There must be labourers and there must be scholars, and no Act of Parliament could make these convertible terms. All that could be done was to make the most of the time during which the children remained at school, and to supplement the day instruction by evening schools. (Hear, hear.) With regard to education in the remote agricultural districts, they were coming more and more within the scope of the grant, but not so rapidly as could be wished; and he believed the fact to be, that when a Government department undertook the education of the poor, the tendency was to make the standard of instruction too high, and raise it above the level of those who were to be benefitted. As to industrial schools, he considered them of primary importance in the distribution of this money, because in them you had a class of children who were clearly altogether dependent for their education on the charity of individuals and the patronage of the State. (Hear, hear.) With regard to middle-class schools, which of course required no such assistance, he was happy to say that this was the first day on which the University of Oxford was conducting its middle-class examinations throughout the kingdom. This movement afforded a most satisfactory evidence of the increased appreciation of education which now prevailed among the middle-classes. He believed this to be owing in no small degree to the immense pressure put by the State on the education of the labouring classes, which had thus extended its influence to the upper ranks of society. He was convinced that if employers only pressed forward vigorously, as Englishmen always did everything they took in hand, the intellectual training of their children, the chief difficulties of national education would be solved, for, when employers had once been highly instructed and sought for skilled labourers, there was no fear but that the class below would answer this demand, and readily and eagerly seek for the advantages of a good education. (Cheers.)

Mr. W. EWART must express his regret that the hon. gentleman (Mr. Adderley) had made no reference in his statement to schools of design, to schools for art education, to museums of practical geology, or to institutions of a similar character. He hoped that, with regard to the poorer classes, endeavours would be made to afford them a really useful education, for he found it was stated by the School Inspectors that, in consequence of the adoption of a practical education for their children, the labouring classes were beginning to appreciate the means of instruction provided for them. He believed that the existing system of education, with its complications of masters, pupil teachers, Queen's scholars, and inspectors, was very good as far as it went, but he regarded it merely as a temporary system, which must be replaced by one more extensive and efficient.

Mr. GILPIN hoped the subject of education would never be made a party question. (Hear, hear.) He was not disposed on that occasion to raise any question as to the comparative merits of voluntary and State systems of education; but he might remind the committee that the Chancellor of the Exchequer, in introducing his budget, had said that the vote for education was originally only

£20,000, that this year it amounted to nearly £1,000,000, and that in a few years the cost of the existing system would be £3,000,000 or £4,000,000. He believed that the early pioneers of education—those who urged its importance before a great majority of its present advocates took any interest in the subject—were convinced that a thoroughly good practical education could best be promoted by means of the voluntary system. He was afraid that, if the statistics relating to pupil teachers were investigated, it would be found that the Council had been training persons for the position of clerks, and for various professions and services, instead of for the duties of school teachers, which was the object for which they had been educated. (Hear.) The great fault was a want of interest in education, and that parliamentary grants could not cure. It was important that the working classes should be taught that it was their duty and their privilege to provide for the education of their children, and anything which would teach them that lesson of independence and self-reliance would be much more valuable than the mere acquisition of Government aid.

Mr. FULLER said that, so far from the great advance lately made in education being owing entirely to voluntary efforts, it was notorious that those voluntary efforts had in a great measure been called into existence by Government aid. If the hon. gentleman who had just sat down would refer to the state of education twenty-five years ago, before these grants were commenced, he would very soon see that the voluntary system by itself was utterly inadequate to the wants of the country. That system was now discarded in every country which had made any advances towards civilization. The hon. gentleman's argument as to the pupil teachers was scarcely fair. The Government got out of them all that it bargained for—assistance in the instruction of young children; and if, on arriving at the age of eighteen or nineteen, they chose to enter into ordinary employment, the country at large was the gainer in the end. He was glad to find that these grants were increasing, for he knew that for every £1 granted, £2 was produced from voluntary subscriptions.

Mr. FOX said that until they could devise some mode for insuring the continuous attendance of children for a greater length of time, all their efforts at general education would be vain. (Hear.) He doubted whether there was any ground for the statement of the right hon. gentleman that education covered a greater area than heretofore. Their exertions did not keep pace with the population. There was still an increasing mass of ignorance, and consequently of vice, which required very different and much more energetic modes of struggling with than any yet adopted. The voluntary system had failed, and so had the mixed. He hoped that the Royal Commission would point out a better system; and in the meantime he firmly believed that the Government could do more indirectly than directly for the encouragement of education. (Hear, hear.) It was on that ground that he was glad to hear the discussion which preceded their going into committee. The removal of taxes which prevented the rapid circulation of knowledge would do much for education; so would the promotion of education among the classes above the lowest class. He rejoiced to hear of the examinations of the pupils of middle-class schools by the University of Oxford, and hoped that they would take place throughout the whole country. Let these examinations be extended to mechanics' institutions, as the minds of the young men studying in them would be excited by an honorable ambition, and a public opinion in favour of education would be created, which would do more for education than the help of Government or the benevolence of individuals. (Hear, hear.)

Mr. LOWE was inclined to agree with the hon. member for Oldham—a very high authority on these subjects—that the Government could, perhaps, do more indirectly than directly for furthering education. (Hear, hear.) The problem which they had to solve was by what means they could make a sense of the benefits of education penetrate the classes for whom this educational system was intended. They ought to hold out some prospect to the poor of their children obtaining a direct advantage from the education which they so earnestly pressed these poor parents to allow their children to receive. His experience of the University system, and the direct pecuniary advantages which it held out, induced him to believe that without such a prospect they would find great difficulty in impressing upon the minds of the poor a sense of the benefits of education. Prizes innumerable, and valuable in the eyes of those who competed for them, ought to be offered to the children of the poor, just as prizes were offered to the students at the Universities. The Government had a great deal in its power in that respect. He did not allude to clerkships in the public offices, but to the office of messenger in the post-office, of letter-carrier, and situations of that kind, which ought to be thrown open to the competition of such as could best pass an examination at the public schools. That competition would benefit not only those who were successful, but also those who were not, inasmuch as it would give a stimulus to their education, and ultimately the people at large would feel the beneficial effects of that