

mated to politics—in such a painful state of fluctuation that it has been well-nigh impossible to keep track of it, as has been pointed out frequently in your columns. Presumably, it should not be a very difficult task to make the appropriations, knowing, as the Department must do, the amount of money to be expended, the number of schools to receive it, and the principles that must guide such apportionments. When, therefore, "X." states that in the case of his High School, a sum is first added and then deducted so as "to bring the grant within the appropriation," the inference evidently is either that the authorities have stupidly blundered in their figures, or that the "basis" is somewhat impracticable, or that some constituencies receive more than their quota. This last suggestion, of course, points plainly to favouritism, and in support of this theory we refer "X." to the printed Report on Education for 1884. If "X." studies that production, fearfully and wonderfully made, specially in reference to the appropriations to High Schools, he will wonder why some schools have been so liberally dealt with, some of which are notorious for inefficiency, and if "X." consider the "basis" in relation to such schools he will get abundance of ma-

terial for future correspondence. I regret that my answer is not more satisfactory, and that, as far as it goes, it reflects in a very pronounced way on the efficiency and purity of the Department. I was going to add that "X." might write to the authorities, but their oracle is so well skilled in Delphic utterance that he very possibly would be obliged to have the answer interpreted. How long is this state of things to continue? Is this not another proof of the failure—the disastrous failure—of our present system? Is there no patriotic legislator on either side of the House sufficiently influential to have a Royal Commission appointed to inquire faithfully and honestly into the working of our Department, and report to the House. There was a time when the efficiency of a school went for something, but now, as far as the grant is concerned, the master is all but powerless to be the means of increasing it. Well-nigh everything is now left to the Trustees. If they are liberal and expend bountifully it is well with the school; but if they are not, no increased effort on the part of the staff can atone for their neglect. The result is not difficult to forecast. Some schools, formerly distinguished for their good name, are already on the "down grade," and more will follow. M.

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THE FIRST ENGLISH GRAMMAR.—To William Bullokar, a school-master in the reign of Elizabeth, must be ascribed the honour of writing the first work on the English Grammar. It was modestly entitled "A Treatise of Ortographia of English, by William Bullokar. London, 1580." As everybody in those days wrote poetry, most of the rules and definitions in this book, as well as the preface, were delivered in metre. In 1656 was published "W. Bullokar's abbreviation for his Grammar for English, extracted out of his Grammar at large, for

speedy parsing of the English speech, and the easier coming to the knowledge of Grammar for other languages. Imprinted at London by Edmund Bollifant, MDLXX-XVI." Both books were printed in black letter, old English, with many curious affectations of spelling, and novelties in type.

Ben Johnson's Grammar was not written until about forty years after his death in 1637. It is entitled "The English Grammar made by Ben Johnson, for the benefit of all strangers, out of his observation of the English Language, now spoken and in use."