

VI. CAUSES OF INEFFICIENCY OF SCHOOLS.

1. DIFFICULTIES OF THE BILINGUAL SITUATION.

The bilingual situation presents in itself a problem of special difficulty. Children have learned to understand and to speak one language, and they are required, in addition, to master the ordinary subjects of the Public School Course of Study, to learn another language, and to become so proficient in it that, in a reasonable time, it may be made the means of communication and the medium of instruction. It is evident that these demands add materially to the work of the schools. Results, therefore, equal to those attained in the ordinary English schools cannot be expected in the same period of time.

2. IRREGULARITIES IN ATTENDANCE.

The irregularities in attendance are doubtless the cause of the backwardness of pupils in many of the schools. The facts regarding the attendance of pupils in the Counties of Essex and Kent, given in the table, do not indicate fully the actual conditions. In many schools the *same* pupils are absent continuously for several months in the year. It is evident that children who attend school in this way at broken intervals for short periods and leave school at twelve, thirteen, or fourteen years of age, cannot, even under the conditions obtaining in well-equipped schools, receive a satisfactory education. The demands of life are now becoming so exacting that the ordinary period at school (from five to fourteen years) is regarded as too short to give a fair preparation for it. When this period is cut down to one-third, the results are disastrous.

Irregularity in attendance lessens the efficiency of even the best schools. Take, for example, St. Alphonsus School, Windsor, which has a competent staff of teachers, and has, I understand, maintained a competent staff for years. No special demands are made on it in teaching children to speak English, because, although about 30 per cent. of the children are French-speaking, all, with the exception of one pupil in Form I, speak English. The standing of the pupils as determined by my examination of the classes was in most departments good, and, upon the whole, satisfactory in all. The school has had a fair record at the Entrance Examinations. Yet, when one compares the standing of the pupils with their ages in the following table, he is convinced that there is a considerable percentage of loss in efficiency in the school. Inquiry shows that this loss is due mainly to irregularities in attendance and to changes of pupils from school to school.

Number of Pupils of the Various Ages in the Different Forms of the St. Alphonsus School, Windsor.

Forms.	5 yr.	6 yr.	7 yr.	8 yr.	9 yr.	10 yr.	11 yr.	12 yr.	13 yr.	14 yr.	15 yr.	16 yr.
I.....	9	37	27	38	19	8	7	5	.....	.....	.....	.....
II.....	.....	.....	.....	3	15	32	13	8	7	3	.....	.....
III.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	2	6	9	12	10	7	1	2
IV.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	2	6	9	17	20	8	5