

HIGH SCHOOL DEPARTMENT.

GOVERNMENT AID TO HIGH SCHOOLS.*

The fact that Boards of Education throughout the Province have seen the grants to High Schools steadily decreasing, has set many friends of education thinking what the end of the matter must be. No one seems able to account satisfactorily for the disappearance of the grant, but that it goes on dwindling down is very apparent. Many well-meaning people believe that a large portion of the money that should be spent upon higher education, pure and simple, is spent upon endless examinations, printing, stationery, postage, and other facile ways, apart from its legitimate application. There is also, and this is not surprising, a great outcry about the wisdom of such an endless round of examinations. And it is, to say the least, remarkable that there should be such a consensus of opinion that, on the whole, the results of these written tests are extremely unsatisfactory. It certainly does seem a very strange thing, that all our educational machinery should be kept in motion for, apparently, no other purpose than simply to rotate the examination fly-wheel. We greatly fear that under the present system, the cause of education is suffering in its aims. But of this, more anon.

The point on which we wish to dwell, at present, is that every year the burden thrown upon municipalities for the support of higher education has increased; that it is increasing, and that it ought to be diminished. Not that we mean to imply by this that the High Schools are inefficient, or that they

cost too much. But there is good reason for contending that the cost, to a much larger extent, should be sustained by the country at large. Some years ago boards of education were led to believe that if they put up good buildings and equipped them from local sources, the expenses of tuition would be borne chiefly by the Legislative and county grants. Acting upon this belief very many boards of education erected commodious structures, purchased costly apparatus, in a word, equipped their local colleges with all necessaries for giving a high-class education. The expectation of Legislative aid, however, has not been realized. Then, too, the training of the teachers, formerly done in the Normal Schools, has been imposed upon the High Schools, and this work, Provincial in its character, has not brought any revenue to the High School treasury. This work, we have no hesitation in saying, is, on the whole, admirably done; better done in fact than it was in the Normal Schools, and should be paid for liberally by the Legislature. Moreover, the number of pupils in the High Schools has steadily increased, while the grant, as a whole, has remained unchanged, and in many cases steadily diminished.

Furthermore, the standard of scholarship in the High Schools has been raised far beyond the old mark, requiring teaching of a correspondingly higher character. In fact, amid the force of competition that is raging throughout all parts of our school system, no High School can live and flourish without thoroughly qualified teachers. Skilled labour bestowed upon Provincial work should be well paid, but the Province, as a whole, should pay the bill in chief part. The locality in which the High School is situated should pay its share, but that should not be the larger share.

*[We give place with pleasure to this article from a contemporary, which has been sent to us by the writer, though we dissent from his opinion with regard to the claims of the Collegiate Institutes to Government aid over those of the High Schools. We shall deal with the point, however, in our next.—EDITOR C. E. M.]