

and may invite it or him to take it up at the Department's cost.

And so, while the Department maintains—and, in my view, must maintain—that fishery investigations are primarily its concern, and that it must have, so to speak, a first call upon State funds available for such research, its policy is to encourage every competent worker in the field; to procure adequate financial support for every institution which is giving its attention seriously to such researches and is so placed as to be in a position to prosecute them successfully; and to work in the closest and most cordial co-operation with them without seeking in any degree to limit their independence.

We are proud to represent the greatest fishing industry that the world has ever seen, and we are determined, if possible—and the possibility depends largely upon the measure of support we can secure from a nation amazingly ignorant of, and indifferent to, this all-important industry—to make Great Britain

lead the world, not only in the practice of fishing, but also in the scientific studies upon which the future prosperity of the industry must depend. We have established close co-operation with our colleagues in Scotland and Ireland, and, I hope and believe, friendly relations with the scientific workers of those institutions which have established a reputation in this field of research and the continued prosperity and efficiency of which it is our hope to secure. And while we seek to lead the world, we seek also to secure the co-operation of the Governments of those other nations which exploit the harvest of the sea; for we have no monopoly of the fishing-grounds, though our position is most favourable for their exploitation, and whatever measures may be devised by science for the maintenance or increase of the harvest can be effective only if they are carried out by international consent, and wisely directed to the attainment of the object which forms the motto of the International Council: "The rational exploitation of the sea."

Scholarships and Free Places in Secondary Schools.¹

AN interesting and important Departmental Report upon the above subject was published on October 25 by the Board of Education. The inquiry was begun a year ago at the instance of Mr. H. A. L. Fisher, President of the Board, and the Committee appointed was comprised of representatives of the Board, of the local education authorities, of persons engaged in elementary and secondary schools, and of others interested in the question. Some sixty-six individual witnesses were examined, including officers of the Board of Education and of local authorities, as well as teachers and others, representing in all thirty organisations wholly or partly concerned with education. The Committee was directed to inquire into the existing arrangements for the award by local authorities of scholarships tenable at secondary schools or institutions of higher education other than universities or institutions for the training of teachers, and into the provision of free places under the regulations of the Board of Education, and to make recommendations thereon with respect to the improvement of such arrangements so as to bring the facilities of higher education within the reach of all classes of the population and with special regard to the migration of pupils from one school area to another.

The report deals concisely with the history of scholarship provision at the instance of local authorities, and shows that the scholarships awarded by them tenable at secondary schools had risen from 2500 in 1895 to more than 12,000 in 1906, and if there be included those awarded to intending teachers, to more than 23,500. The next important step with the object of facilitating the transfer of suitable pupils from elementary to secondary schools was taken by the Board of Education in 1907, whereby, as a condition of qualifying for the higher rate of grant, secondary schools were required to admit a certain percentage of pupils (ordinarily 25 per cent. of the previous year's admissions) from public elementary schools, subject to an entrance test of proficiency. These were styled "free-place scholars."

The immediate effect of these regulations was to increase the number of pupils receiving free tuition in secondary schools, including those arranged for by local authorities, from 24 to 27 per cent. In 1911-12 the total number of pupils receiving free tuition in such schools had risen to 32 per cent., the actual

figures being 52,583, of whom 49,130 had been in public elementary schools, and of this number 38,009 owed their exemption from fees to the scholarship and free-place arrangements of the local authorities. At the present time in 961 grant-aided secondary schools in England with some 246,000 pupils enrolled, the number of "free places" held amounts to 72,386, or about 30 per cent., made up of 53,460 awarded by local authorities, 16,548 by school governors, and 2378 by other endowments.

It is now the duty of the local authorities, made statutory by the Education Act of 1918, to make provision for the means of higher education for all children capable of profiting thereby. It is estimated on the basis of 20 per 1000 of the total population of England and Wales that there should be at least 720,000 duly qualified children in the secondary schools, or more than double the present number. The grave defect of the present system is, the report states, that exemption from fees alone does not, by reason of the poverty of many parents, enable their children to take advantage of the benefits of higher education, or if they do they are quite unable to keep them at school beyond fourteen years of age for the full period of secondary education. It is therefore recommended that maintenance allowances, including all incidental school charges, should be made available for all free-place pupils who are in need of them. Whilst favourable to the abolition of all fees in grant-aided secondary schools, the Committee scarcely considers the time ripe for so drastic a change, and therefore suggests as a tentative measure the raising of the percentage of free places from 25 to 40 per cent. of the admissions. The age of admission of free-place pupils should be between eleven and twelve, determined upon by an examination in English and arithmetic, followed by an oral examination. Free places should be awarded for the full school course, secured by agreement with the parents, and where a pupil migrates to another area he should be entitled to continue his education upon the same terms. It is recommended that children who have not been previously educated in public elementary schools shall be eligible as free-place pupils provided that the parents show inability to pay fees for higher education.

The report is signed by all the members of the Committee, subject to certain reservations on the part of a few members. It concludes with a valuable summary of statistics bearing upon various aspects of higher and specialised education.

¹ Report of the Departmental Committee on Scholarships and Free Places. Pp. vi+82. (London: H.M. Stationery Office.) Price 9d. net.