

The average number of pupils per teacher in all schools (taking two pupil-teachers as being equal to one adult teacher) was 33, or one more than in the previous year. It will be observed, however, from the above figures that less than 62,000 children are included in the groups in which the average number of children per teacher was 33 or less, while nearly 60,000 are in the groups having one teacher to every 45 children or more, and of that number nearly 29,000 have 48 or 49 as the average number of pupils per teacher. It must be admitted that in the case of the larger schools many teachers have too large a number of children under their care, and that much yet remains to be done in the direction of reducing the size of classes to a number more nearly compatible with efficiency. In legislation dealing with staffs and salaries of teachers now under consideration the opportunity is being taken of providing some relief in this respect for schools with more than 400 pupils. It is difficult to make a fair comparison in this respect with other countries, as the varying proportion of small sole-teacher schools affects the average figure given. There appears, however, to be little difference between this figure as given for other English-speaking countries and for New Zealand. The latest figures available relative to the London County Council schools, which are very large schools, show the average number of pupils per teacher to be 37, the conditions in this respect in London schools being apparently superior to those prevailing in the large schools of this Dominion.

With regard to the sex of public-school teachers, the figures below show a continued increase in the proportion of women to men teachers. Taking the adult teachers of all schools, it will be noticed that in 1914 there were 173 female teachers to every 100 males, and that in 1917 the corresponding number of females has risen to 240. Similarly, in sole-teacher schools the number of female teachers to every 100 male teachers has increased from 386 in 1916 to 544 in 1917. The actual number of male adult teachers decreased from 1,501 in 1916 to 1,383 in 1917—a fall of 118 in one year, while the number of female teachers increased by 115. The war is, of course, largely responsible for the reduction in the number of male teachers, but it is feared also that the teaching profession is ceasing to attract as large a number of able young men as is desirable. This is apparent from the comparatively small numbers of male pupil-teachers and probationers—a class which is not affected to any great extent by the war. There were 517 female and 132 male pupil teachers in 1917, and 349 female and 61 male probationers. In 1914 there were 338 female pupil-teachers to every 100 males, and in 1917 the corresponding number of females had risen to 391. In the training colleges, where the influence of the war is most acutely felt, the proportion of men to women in 1917 was 100 to 563, the corresponding figures in 1914 being 100 to 249. While it is allowed that women teachers are suitable for three-fourths of the school population, half of the number of children being under ten years of age and half of the remainder being girls, it is clear that men are not entering the teaching profession in the proportion of one to three, and the necessity of attracting them in larger numbers must be faced.

The following figures show in detail the position with regard to the proportion of men teachers and women teachers in the primary schools:—

	1914.		1915.		1916.		1917.	
	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.
Ratio of adult male to adult female teachers—								
Schools with 1 to 20 scholars ..	100	: 385*	100	: 323	100	: 386	100	: 544
Schools with more than 20 scholars ..	100	: 159†	100	: 176	100	: 194	100	: 213
All schools ..	100	: 173	100	: 193	100	: 214	100	: 240
Ratio of male pupil-teachers to female pupil-teachers ..	100	: 338	100	: 344	100	: 379	100	: 391
Ratio of male to female teachers (including pupil-teachers), all schools ..	100	: 186	100	: 205	100	: 228	100	: 254

* Schools with 1 to 15 scholars; grade altered in 1915.

† Schools with over 15 pupils.

The war has affected the position so greatly in this respect that too much weight should not be attached to a comparison with the conditions in other countries. It appears, however, from the latest available statistics that (including junior or student teachers or persons in similar positions) in the United States of America 2 in every 10 teachers are men, in Ontario 2 in every 8, in Victoria 2 in every 6, in Queensland 2 in every 5, in New South Wales 2 in every 4, while in New Zealand the corresponding figures are 2 in every 7.