

S6 in 1916, 1,392 entered the secondary departments of district high schools, 2,871 secondary schools, and 1,226 technical high schools; hence a total of 5,489 children, or 58 per cent. of those who left the primary schools having passed S6, in 1916, or 37 per cent. of the whole number that left school in that year, entered upon an education of a secondary nature at one of the types of school mentioned. In addition to those enumerated, 2,276 children proceeded from the primary schools to evening technical classes. Of these, 1,584 had passed S6 and 692 had not done so.

The average length of stay of boys at secondary schools (group (a) above) is two years and nine months, and of girls two years and eight months. The following figures show the percentage of children leaving the secondary schools at the stages indicated :—

				Boys.	Girls.
(a.)	Percentage leaving at end of first	year or during second year	..	22	20
(b.)	..	second ..	third ..	28	35
(c.)	..	third ..	fourth ..	24	17
(d.)	..	fourth ..	fifth ..	14	18
(e.)	..	fifth ..	sixth ..	9	6
(f.)	Percentage remaining at end of sixth year	3	4

The fact that over 20 per cent. of the pupils leave at the end of the first or during the second year is a matter for regret, as very little good can be gained from spending so short a time in the study of secondary subjects. The evil is mitigated if such pupils take what is termed a short course, in which, instead of commencing the study of a number of new subjects, including languages, they devote the time, more or less, to pursuing further subjects already begun in the primary school, or to the study of simpler subjects bearing upon the vocations they intend following. The length of time spent by pupils at the secondary departments of district high schools is for the most part short, only about one-sixth of the pupils remaining after the second year. In the case of these schools, it is recognized that pupils often attend merely with the object of finishing off their primary education, and that the number preparing for higher education or for the learned professions is small.

CURRICULUM OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS AND DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOLS.

(E.—6, Tables K13 and L3).

Although there are no departmental regulations directly governing the curriculum of secondary schools, the regulations defining the subjects of instruction to be taught to free-place holders and the prescribed syllabuses of the various public examinations to a large extent control the character of the courses of work undertaken. Amended regulations issued during the year made it compulsory for all junior free pupils to receive instruction in history and civics preparatory to a course in the elementary principles of economics to be taken at a later stage. The regulations also provided for girls to be instructed in home science, together with one or more of the subjects cookery, laundry-work, needlework, home nursing; while boys attending district high schools must, unless the school has been specially exempted, receive instruction in practical agriculture and dairy science, if equivalent instruction of a vocational nature is not otherwise provided for.

The courses taken in secondary schools may be roughly classified as follows: (1) General or professional, (2) non-Latin, (3) non-French, (4) commercial, (5) agricultural, (6) domestic. From returns received it appears that the following percentages of pupils took the various courses: Boys—Professional or general, 55 per cent.; non-Latin, 11 per cent.; non-French, 2 per cent.; commercial, 24 per cent.; agricultural, 8 per cent. Girls—Professional or general, 44 per cent.; non-Latin, 32 per cent.; commercial, 18 per cent.; domestic, 6 per cent. Including those taking a full agricultural course, 529 boys, or about 14 per cent., receive instruction in agriculture, 106 boys learn dairy science, and 420 take woodwork. Similarly, including the girls taking a full domestic course, 1,347, or 39 per cent., are instructed in home science, 893 learn needlework, 423 cookery, and 68 home nursing. The number of pupils taking book-keeping is 1,779, or 24 per cent. of the whole number of students. The diminishing number of secondary-school pupils studying Latin is noticeable, only 55 per cent. of the boys and 44 per cent. of the girls including it in their course in 1917, while French was taken by 83 per cent. of the boys and by 92 per cent. of the girls.