

In the case of district high schools the courses taken are of a more vocational nature, and to a large extent have a bearing upon rural pursuits. It appears that 48 per cent. of the pupils take agriculture, and 29 per cent. dairy-work; 52 per cent. of the boys take woodwork, and 13 per cent. surveying and mensuration; while 54 per cent. of the girls learn needlework and cookery. The various branches of science receive adequate attention, 66 per cent. of the pupils studying chemistry and physics, 46 per cent. botany, 26 per cent. hygiene, 14 per cent. physiology and zoology, and 12 per cent. of the girls domestic science. Only 40 per cent. of the pupils in these schools learn Latin, and 30 per cent. French. Commercial work, frequently forming part of a rural course, is taken by 29 per cent. of the pupils.

Information respecting the curriculum of technical high schools may be found in the section "Technical Instruction."

FREE SECONDARY EDUCATION.

(E.—6, Table K5.)

Free places are divided into two classes—junior and senior—both being tenable at secondary schools and district high schools, or, under somewhat different conditions, at technical schools.

Generally speaking, junior free places are tenable for two years, with a possible extension in certain cases to three years. In the case of their being held at district high schools they are tenable to the age of seventeen. The means of qualification are—

- (1.) For entrance to secondary schools and district high schools—
 - (a) Special examinations for Junior National Scholarships,
 - (b) the certificate of proficiency.
- (2.) For entrance to technical high schools the means of qualification named in (1), or the certificate of competency in S6, with a special endorsement of merit in handwork and elementary science, which for the purposes of technical schools is deemed to be equivalent to a certificate of proficiency.
- (3.) For entrance to technical classes other than technical high schools the means of qualification named in (1) or (2), or, under special conditions applicable to industrial courses only, a recommendation by the Inspector of Schools if a pupil is over fourteen years and has been in regular attendance at a public school up to a date not more than six months prior to the date of admission to the technical classes.

Senior free places are tenable at secondary schools, district high schools, and technical high schools up to the age of nineteen, and at technical classes other than technical high schools for three or in some cases four years. The means of qualification for senior free places are the Intermediate or other equivalent examinations, or the recommendation of the Principal or Director of the school or classes attended based on the school records and examination results, or the recommendation of an Inspector of Secondary Schools, or in the case of district high schools of the Senior Inspector of the district, or in part on such a recommendation and in part on the results of a special examination.

The provision for qualification for senior free places on the recommendation of the Principals of secondary schools, which was partially suspended in 1916, was again reverted to in 1917, and 1,047 pupils were thus granted senior free places, twenty-two, in addition, receiving partial exemption from examination, and being required to submit to a test in English and arithmetic only.

The following are some of the figures for 1916 and 1917 in regard to free places in secondary schools:—

	1916.	1917.
Number of secondary schools giving free tuition ..	31	32
Roll number of these schools	6,585	7,106
Number of free-place holders at end of year ..	5,826	6,231
Average number of free-place holders during year ..	6,045	6,468
Free-place holders as a percentage of roll number ..	92 per cent.	91 per cent.
Total annual payment by Government for free places ..	£74,380	£78,567
Cost to Government per free pupil	£12 6s. 10d.	£12 2s. 11d.

In order to arrive at the total number of pupils in New Zealand receiving free secondary instruction it will be necessary, however, to include also 104 holders of