

to ensure the putting-forward of only the best candidates. The special admission of candidates who are too old to qualify for junior free places in the Certificate of Proficiency Examination has again, however, been necessary.

The Public Service Commissioner, in accordance with his previous announcement, confined admission to the last Public Service Senior Examination to those candidates who had already some status in the examination and desired to gain a complete pass. Those who failed to complete the examination are being given a last opportunity of doing so in January, 1919. The only other candidates who will be admitted are returned soldiers who have been prevented by their absence from entering for examination earlier.

After requiring all the candidates for senior free places in secondary schools and district high schools to come up for examination in November, 1916, the Department returned again, in 1917, to the practice which had previously been in force for some years, of granting senior free places to approved candidates, without special examination, on the recommendation of the Principals of the secondary schools attended by them, or, in the case of district-high-school pupils, of Inspectors of Schools.

The suspension of the recommendations for a year provided a test from which the system is seen to have worked satisfactorily in the past, and can be relied to do so again in the future.

The numbers of candidates who actually presented themselves in the examination-room are given below. For the sake of comparison the figures for the previous three years are also given.

	1914-15.	1915-16.	1916-17.	1917-18.
Junior National Scholarships and junior free places ..	3,562	3,973	4,403	3,122
Public Service Entrance, Senior National Scholarships, and Intermediate	2,739	3,022	3,839	3,315
Teachers D and C	1,576	1,720	1,941	2,102
Public Service Senior	804	675	653	226
Typists' Examination	46	51	50	60
Kindergarten Certificate Examination	8	5	4
London University Examinations	2	1	1
	8,727	9,453	10,894	8,830

Candidates for Senior National Scholarships again had the option of being examined under a programme (scheme A) corresponding to the usual secondary-school course, or under an alternative one (scheme B) intended to suit candidates who have been taking courses with an agricultural or domestic bias. The regulations were amended in September, 1916, to help scheme B candidates by doubling the maximum marks for laboratory work or outdoor work in field and garden. The numbers of candidates examined under the scheme A programme so far remain much the same from year to year.

The standards of qualification for the year, fixed in accordance with the provisions of the Act, were $63\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. for juniors and 63 per cent. for seniors. In the case of junior scholarship candidates from one-teacher schools the standard of qualification was fixed at its lowest limit allowable by regulation—viz., 10 per cent. below the ordinary standard.

The value of the services rendered by Inspectors of Schools in connection with the examination of papers and supervision of the annual examinations is estimated at about £1,400. The cost of conducting the examinations was as follows :—

Total expenses, including cost of additional clerical services temporarily employed, but omitting other salaries	£	5,810
Less recoveries—	£	
Fees paid by candidates for teachers' certificates and others ..	2,285	
Paid by Public Service Commissioner for expense of conducting Public Service Examinations, the fees for which, amounting to £1,336, were credited to him—		
Public Service Entrance	766	
Public Service Senior	308	
	3,359	
Net expenditure	£2,451	