

complete their passes. In January, 1920, only returned soldiers who have previously obtained partial success and are desirous of completing their passes will be admitted to the examination.

In future, officers of the Public Service will be required to take the Matriculation Examination in lieu of the Public Service Senior Examination.

The following table shows collectively, in comparison with the preceding year, the number who entered for the various examinations above enumerated, the number present, and the number of absentees:—

	1917-18.	1918-19.
Number who entered .. .. .	9,908	9,054
Number who actually sat for examination .. .. .	8,829	6,515
Number of absentees .. .. .	1,079	2,539

In connection with the Junior National Scholarship Examination of January, 1919, the Department endeavoured, as far as possible, to prevent the presentation of unprepared candidates, and the consequent heavy burden of work upon the examiners and unnecessary expense to the country. Head teachers were permitted to present, in general, not more than 10 per cent. of their Sixth Standard pupils for the examination, and secondary-school Principals were asked to take similar steps to ensure the putting-forward of only the best candidates. The last examination was not altogether a fair test owing to the influenza epidemic; in spite of this, however, the percentage of failures was reduced from 57 in the previous year to 49·5 at this examination. The special admission of candidates who were too old to qualify for junior free places in the Certificate of Proficiency Examination was again necessary.

The practice 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, was continued in 1918.

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.

	1915-16.	1916-17.	1917-18.	1918-19.
Junior National Scholarships and junior free places ..	3,973	4,403	3,122	1,917
Public Service Entrance, Senior National Scholarships, and Intermediate .. .. .	3,022	3,839	3,315	2,422
Teachers D and C .. .. .	1,720	1,941	2,102	1,912
Public Service Senior .. .. .	675	653	226	78
Typists' Examination .. .. .	51	50	60	46
Kindergarten Certificate Examination .. .. .	8	5	4	5
Special Public Service Entrance Examination in June ..	..	..	..	133
London University Examinations .. .. .	2	1	1	2
	9,453	10,894	8,830	6,515

The large decrease in number of candidates sitting for examinations is accounted for, for the most part, by the epidemic and the consequent postponement of the examinations, the number who did not present themselves for examination after entering being abnormally large.

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 remains much the same from year to year.

The standards of qualification for the year, fixed in accordance with the provisions of the Act, were 62½ per cent. for juniors and 60½ 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.