

Similarly it appears that 16 per cent. of the pupils leave school without doing the work of S5. The law as at present constituted allows children to leave school upon attaining the age of fourteen years irrespective of the class reached, and an amendment in the direction of raising the compulsory school age would unquestionably benefit the leavers here referred to. In 1918 they numbered 4,662, being nearly half as many as left having passed S6. An attempt to assist some of the children leaving school thus ill-prepared for their future work was made by extending the free-place system at technical schools to offer them some training in subjects related to industrial occupations. The attempt has been successful in so far as nearly 1,000 such free places were taken up in 1919 by pupils who had not passed S6.

Examination of Pupils.

The usual practice of the Inspectors examining the pupils of S6 for the proficiency and competency certificates was reverted to in 1919 after having been partially suspended in 1918 owing to the influenza epidemic. The examinations resulted in 9,381 certificates of proficiency being awarded, the number representing 68·3 per cent. of the S6 roll, and 2,195 certificates of competency, representing 16 per cent. of the roll. Of the latter certificates 287 were endorsed for merit in science and handwork. The number of proficiency certificates awarded was 5·3 per cent. less than in the previous year, the percentage approximating more closely to that of 1917, when the examinations were conducted by the Inspectors. There was a wide range of difference in the results of the various education districts, the lowest percentage of proficiency certificates awarded being 56·1 and the highest 76. The range difference is less marked than it was in 1917, but the fact that it occurred in 1918 when the examinations were conducted for the most part by the teachers goes to show that it is not due to the personal equation of the Inspectors, but apparently to an uneven standard of attainment in the various education districts.

REGISTERED PRIMARY PRIVATE SCHOOLS.

(Tables D1 and D2.)

The number of primary private schools (excluding private schools for Natives referred to elsewhere) registered under the Education Act, 1914, in 1919 was 212, compared with 210 in 1918. For the purpose of ensuring that children who do not attend public schools, wherein the State is willing to provide for them, are receiving adequate instruction elsewhere, private schools are inspected by the Department's Inspectors, upon the character of whose reports the registration largely depends. Pupils in S6 are also examined by the Inspectors for certificates of proficiency and competency. The following are the statistics relative to these schools:—

		1918.		1919.	
Number of schools	210		212	
Roll number at end of year—Boys	..	9,042		9,525	
Girls..	..	11,034		11,452	
		20,076		20,977	
Average attendance	17,441		18,472	
		Number.	Percentage.	Number.	Percentage.
Children under seven years of age	..	3,957	20·0	3,902	19·0
Children from seven to ten years of age	..	6,684	33·0	6,775	32·0
Children over ten years of age	..	9,435	47·0	10,300	49·0
Children in preparatory classes	..	6,380	32·0	6,636	32·0
		Males.	Females.	Males.	Females.
Number of full-time teachers	..	44	639	67	616
Average number of pupils per teacher	..	26		27	
S6 pupils presented for examination	..	1,471		1,553	
		Number.	Percentage.	Number.	Percentage.
Proficiency certificates issued	..	1,076	74·0	917	59
Competency certificates issued	..	227	16·0	261	17

Tables D1 and D2 give particulars of the schools in the various districts. A list of registered private schools is published each year in the *New Zealand Gazette*.

CONVEYANCE AND BOARD OF SCHOLARS.

Free passes on the railway to the nearest public or private school are granted to children living near to the railway-line but out of reach of a primary school, and the same privilege is enjoyed by pupils having to travel to attend secondary schools, district high schools, and technical high schools, and also by free-place holders travelling to attend technical schools or classes other than technical high schools.