

observing methods of teaching, examining and criticizing schemes and programmes of work, demonstrating methods of teaching, and advising the teachers generally. The subjects of English, arithmetic, history, and geography all receive special attention at the S6 examination, and the Department has made every effort to secure uniformity in the granting of certificates. 12,689 certificates of proficiency, representing 72·7 per cent. of the S6 roll number, and 2,488 competency certificates, representing 14·2 per cent. of the roll, were awarded in public schools. Of the latter 614 were endorsed for merit in science or handwork. The percentage of awards for the Dominion differs very little from that of the preceding year, but the range difference between the highest and lowest results from the various districts, although still much too great, shows an improvement. The highest percentage of proficiency certificates awarded was 82, and the lowest 66, the difference being 14 per cent., as compared with a range difference of 23 per cent. in 1921. The problem of setting and reaching a uniform standard of work in all districts has been referred to in previous reports, and it is hoped that gradually a solution of the difficulty will be arrived at. The quality of the S6 pupils' work in English and arithmetic has caused the Department some concern since the work presented in these subjects at the Junior National Scholarship Examination revealed considerable inaccuracy in arithmetical calculations as well as very poor knowledge of British history and elementary civics. The attention of teachers and Inspectors has been drawn to these weaknesses, and improvement is confidently expected.

PUPILS LEAVING THE PRIMARY SCHOOLS.

The number of pupils returned as having left the primary schools in 1921 was 16,362, of which number 12,274 had passed S6 and 4,088, or 25 per cent., had not done so. That so high a percentage of pupils should leave school without obtaining what must be regarded as the minimum educational equipment necessary for their life's work is a matter of grave concern. A certain percentage of these pupils are mentally incapable of accomplishing the work of S6, but such is not the case with the great majority of them. Various circumstances having contributed to their being over-age for their classes, their parents have not seen fit to allow them to remain longer at school. The disadvantage under which such children are placed has been repeatedly emphasized, apparently with some result, since in two years' time the percentage of leavers before passing S6 has been reduced from 34 per cent. to 25 per cent., and the hope is expressed that this percentage, which is still much too high, will continue to diminish. About 50 per cent. of the boys leaving school at this stage take up farming pursuits, and 30 per cent. learn trades, the remainder following miscellaneous callings. The provision of free places at technical schools for specially recommended pupils over fourteen years of age who have not passed S6 has been of some little assistance to these pupils, some 150 free places of this kind having been taken up in 1922. Of the pupils who pass S6 the high proportion of 63 per cent. enter upon some course of secondary education, although approximately one-quarter of the number leave after one year's tuition. A comparison with the statistics in Scotland bearing on the matter is interesting. In that country the primary course is intended to be completed at the age of twelve, and 21 per cent. of the pupils leave school before completing this course. Of those that do so qualify 17 per cent. proceed no further, 50 per cent. follow a supplementary course of upwards of one year's duration, and 33 per cent. pass on to an intermediate or secondary school. The figures for this Dominion therefore appear to compare favourably with those of Scotland.

REGISTERED PRIVATE PRIMARY SCHOOLS.

(Tables D1 and D2 in E.-2.)

The provisions of the Education Amendment Act, 1921-22, make it compulsory for all private schools to apply for registration, which is granted if in the opinion of the Department's Inspectors the instruction afforded is as efficient as in a public school of the same class and if the school is satisfactory from the point of view of premises, staff, and equipment. The operation of the Act has resulted in the registration of an increased number of private schools, and in raising the efficiency of some that were below the required standard. The parents of children attending unregistered schools are liable to a penalty under the compulsory