

A recent amendment in the regulations provides for the award of free places in any type of secondary school to specially recommended proficiency-certificate holders over the prescribed age of fifteen years. It is agreed that such pupils should as a rule take up a somewhat practical course of instruction, and that they should preferably enter a technical or a technical high school. Children who have been retarded owing to their living in the country or other external circumstances, and those who, although not bright in literary work, show sufficient merit in other subjects to warrant a continued education, are thus provided for.

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. Recommendation is the qualification now frequently offered, the number receiving senior free places in this manner in 1922 being 2,609, representing nearly three-fifths of the total number of senior free places gained.

As a result of the free-place system 16,025 children were receiving free secondary education in 1922, an increase of 2,203 over the number for the previous year. Of this total, 9,446 were in secondary schools, 2,492 in district high schools, 3,978 in technical high schools, and 108 in Maori secondary schools. The number represents 94 per cent. of the pupils of all Government schools affording secondary education. The following table gives details of the free places held in 1921 and 1922 :—

FREE PLACES IN DECEMBER, 1921 AND 1922.

	1921.			1922.		
	Boys.	Girls.	Total.	Boys.	Girls.	Total.
(i.) Secondary schools—						
(a.) Junior free pupils	2,713	2,941	5,654	3,472	3,222	6,694
(b.) Senior free pupils	1,723	1,163	2,886	1,536	1,216	2,752
Totals	4,436	4,104	8,540	5,008	4,438	9,446
(ii.) District high schools—						
(a.) Junior free pupils	841	870	1,711	1,033	1,063	2,096
(b.) Senior free pupils	145	173	318	181	215	396
Totals	986	1,043	2,029	1,214	1,278	2,492
(iii.) Maori secondary schools	50	62	112	52	56	108
(iv.) Technical high schools—						
(a.) Junior free pupils	1,445	1,202	2,647	1,881	1,461	3,342
(b.) Senior free pupils	232	261	493	337	300	637
Totals	1,677	1,463	3,140	2,218	1,761	3,979
Grand totals	7,149	6,672	13,821	8,492	7,533	16,025

SCHOLARSHIPS HELD AT SECONDARY SCHOOLS AND DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOLS.

(Tables K4 and K5.)

National Scholarships.

Junior and Senior National Scholarships are awarded by the Government on the results of annual examinations, the junior examination being of a standard somewhat higher than that of the certificate of proficiency, and the candidates being not over fourteen years of age; and the senior examination being of a standard comparable with the standard of the Public Service Entrance Examination, the candidates being not over sixteen years of age. Scholarships are awarded to all candidates reaching a certain standard, the standard of award being determined so as approximately to provide one scholarship (junior or senior) for every 500 children in attendance at all public schools; the Junior and Senior Scholarships