

to illiteracy in 1864 and the present time would be interesting, but the Government Statistician has long ceased to collect or publish statistics relating to illiteracy, and it is safe to say that, except among race-alien, mentally afflicted persons, and very young children, illiteracy in New Zealand has entirely disappeared. Further evidence of the rise in the standard of education in the Dominion is given by the following statistics: In 1914 there were no fewer than 579 uncertificated and unlicensed teachers in schools above Grade O—that is, in schools with an average attendance of nine and over, while in 1920 there were 329, in 1925 about 230, and in 1930 only 43. In all cases teachers in training have, of course, been excluded. Expressed in another way, the figures show that whereas in 1914 74 per cent. of the adult teachers in primary schools were certificated, in 1930 the percentage had risen to over 93. It is worth remarking here that in the elementary schools in England 73 per cent. of the teachers are certificated. Again, in 1918 only 8·3 per cent. of New Zealand primary-school teachers held Class A or Class B certificates, while in 1930 the percentage had risen to 19. Further, the proportion of primary teachers with the lower certificates fell from 52·5 per cent. in 1918 to 21 per cent. in 1930. The number of University graduates among primary-school teachers in 1920 was 244, or only 4·9 per cent. In 1925 the number rose to 329, or 5·7 per cent., and in 1930 to 385, or 6·2 per cent. The corresponding percentage in England was 3·19, in Scotland 27·11, in New South Wales 8·95, and in Victoria 9·47. Out of 1,237 teachers employed in 1930 in secondary schools, technical schools, and manual-training centres, 748, or 60 per cent., were University graduates. Taking primary and secondary teachers together, New Zealand had in 1930 14·7 per cent. of graduate teachers, while England had 14·2 per cent.

A similar advance is shown in respect to general University education. In 1914 there were 211 passes for degrees, in 1918, owing to the war, the number fell to 146, but rose in 1925 to 516, and in 1930 to 521. In 1914 only 155 students held University bursaries, while in 1930 there were no fewer than 1,112, all of whom had in the secondary schools attained at least the standard required for the issue of a higher-leaving certificate. Otherwise expressed, the number of University bursars was 1·4 per 10,000 of the population in 1914, but was 7·8 per 10,000 in 1930. In 1914 the number of students who passed the Matriculation Examination of the New Zealand University was 617, or 5·6 per 10,000 of the population, while by 1930 the number had risen to 2,038, or 14·4 per 10,000 of the population. The number of pupils who qualified for and enjoyed free post-primary education was 8,942 in 1914, or 81 per 10,000 of the population, while in 1930 the corresponding figures were 28,812, or 203 per 10,000.

During the last few years the practice of awarding proficiency certificates on an accrediting system has become more and more widely adopted. While there is much to be said in favour of such system as opposed to the method of basing awards on the results of an external examination, it is desirable that the accrediting system should be periodically overhauled and the results secured by accrediting subjected to an examination test. Last year such a test was made, and will, for checking purposes, be repeated this year. It is anticipated that these investigations will show whether or not the method of allowing head teachers to accredit their candidates can with safety be continued.

In the past the award of Senior Free Places to pupils who have completed the ordinary junior post-primary course has been left almost entirely to the discretion of the principals of the schools concerned. The awards have always been subject to the oversight of the Inspectors, and have generally been made with satisfactory discretion and judgment. As in the case of the Proficiency Certificate Examination, it was, however, felt that the system should be tested periodically by holding a definite and, as far as possible, uniform examination of the candidates. By this means both the school principals and the officers of the Department would know whether or not the standard of appraisal of the pupils' fitness for further secondary education was sufficiently high and reasonably uniform throughout the Dominion. The results of this investigation, which will be held during the current year, will be looked forward to with interest, and will be recorded in my next annual report.