

*Secondary Schools.*

There are in New Zealand twenty-five incorporated or endowed secondary schools subject to inspection by the Education Department. They receive from endowments an income of about £30,000, in addition to occasional grants, and the payment of certain fees by the Government for "free places" for pupils from Board schools. The average attendance at endowed secondary schools during 1902 was 2,836 pupils. A remarkable concession in the direction of free secondary education was made in December, 1902, when the Government decided that "free places" entitling to a two-years course of secondary instruction should be even to all children in the public schools who had passed the Fifth Standard before the age of fourteen years. As a result, 781 children had, up to October, 1903, taken advantage of the concession, and the Government paid at the rate of £6 per annum for 584 of these. The remainder were accounted for by the "free places" which the schools must give for each £50 of income derived from endowments. At the time of my visit, the Minister, the Right Hon. R. J. Seddon, in the course of a public address said that a thousand children would be provided for by "free places" during the current year, and that the Government hoped to find the number steadily increase.

It is too soon, of course, to determine whether this generous concession to popular education will be an unmixed blessing to those who take advantage of it. Much will depend upon the syllabus of work laid down in the secondary schools. But it is an evidence of the enthusiasm for education which animates the people of New Zealand and their readiness to make sacrifices for it. No Australian State has come anywhere near such a scheme. Its influence upon the secondary schools themselves, by the introduction each year of a considerable number of boys and girls from the public schools, is to be reckoned with. It must tend to break down class feeling wherever this exists. There is no greater or more beneficent democratising agency than widely diffused education, for with it the best results of democracy are made possible. New Zealand has in its political system all the forms of democratic government. It evidently aims at securing through its educational system the informing democratic spirit without which these may be merely mischievous. New Zealand has "accepted the consequences of democracy" in her education system at least.

*Scholarships.*

Scholarships are provided for New Zealand children on an exceptionally generous scale. As pointed out above, a capitation grant is made to each Board for the purpose of scholarships to secondary schools, and the report shows that in 1902 the Board thus expended £8,395 11s. 5d. upon 355 scholars. The value of the scholarships varies very much under different Boards, the amounts ranging from £5 per annum to £50 per annum to suit circumstances. The recent institution of "free places" in secondary schools for all children who pass the Sixth Standard at the age of fourteen years raises the question whether the Board scholarships, so far as they assist to pay school fees, are now necessary, and the method most likely to be adopted is to use the money thus set free for the purpose of procuring boarding scholarships for country children who have not the ordinary facilities for obtaining secondary education. At the present time, therefore, a thousand New Zealand children are occupying "free places" in secondary schools at the State expense, and the Boards spend, in addition, upwards of £8,000 per annum in scholarships to 355 pupils.

For the purpose of comparison it may be mentioned that in Victoria the amount expended upon scholarships to secondary schools during the year 1902-3 was £1,936 4s. 9d., and for exhibitions to the University, £2,350. The number of pupils benefited is about 230.

In addition to the above scholarships a new system of scholarships has been provided for by an Act "to encourage Higher Education in New Zealand by the Granting of National Scholarships" (23rd November, 1903). This Act was passed "for the purpose of bringing higher education within reach of deserving scholars." The national scholarships are of two kinds, "Junior National Scholarships" and "Senior National Scholarships." The junior scholarships are offered to children of less than fourteen years of age, and are for the purpose of giving facilities for obtaining secondary education. The term of the scholarship is three years, and its value is £10 per annum in addition to the amount of the tuition fees, if any, payable at the secondary school which the scholar attends. The term of three years may, however, be extended to four years with the approval of the Minister.

The conditions governing the award of the scholarship are different from any which obtain in Victoria. In Victoria none of the scholarships are ear-marked for special districts, and as the scholarship is barely sufficient to pay for tuition fees at a secondary school, no restriction is made as to the pupil who may hold it. The New Zealand plan, however, recognises clearly that the national scholarship does more than provide free tuition in a secondary school. As the facilities for obtaining this free tuition are now so abundant, the national scholarship really becomes a grant towards the maintenance of the scholar while he is receiving education. The Act, therefore, restricts the scholarship to the children of parents whose net income is not more than £250 per annum; and, moreover, it provides that not more than one scholarship shall be awarded in any year to candidates from any one school, that the scholarships shall be distributed over the whole colony, and that country schools shall have their fair share of awards. The principle laid down is evidently that every parent in New Zealand, whatever his income, has a right to a scholarship admitting his child without fee to a secondary school; but where the State is asked to provide subsistence-money in addition to free education the scholarship is restricted to the children of persons of small income. The number of junior scholarships is fixed at one for each 5,000 children in average yearly attendance, but with the proviso that the total number in any one year shall not exceed thirty-one.

The Senior National Scholarships are designed to provide for the most deserving of the holders of junior scholarships a further training in the University. They are awarded to junior scholars upon examination, and are tenable for three years. The annual value of a senior scholarship is £20 per annum in addition to the amount of the tuition fees, if any, payable at the University college. The following