

There has been a steady increase since last year in all the groups of schools giving secondary instruction, with the exception of district high schools; these latter must, of necessity, decline somewhat, for from time to time, as districts become more closely settled, the district high schools are disestablished and secondary schools established in their stead; thus, during the year, Hamilton High School replaced the district high school.

The population of New Zealand, according to the 1911 census, was 1,058,312, including Maoris and Chatham Island colonists, but excluding the inhabitants of the Cook and other annexed islands. Thus, the proportion of persons receiving some form of day secondary instruction in 1911 was 93·1 per 10,000 of population. In 1906 the corresponding proportion was 72·7 per 10,000, so, even after allowing for private secondary schools, which were not taken into consideration in the earlier return, there has been a very steady development of secondary education in New Zealand during the past five years. Although, from an examination of the figures set out in blue-books received from England and Scotland, it would appear that the proportion in this Dominion is well ahead of that in those two countries, it is still behind the United States, which claims 122 secondary pupils per 10,000 of population.

Further information in regard to the roll and attendance at secondary schools will be found in Tables K1, K3, and K4, and at district high schools in Tables L1 and L2 of the secondary schools report (E.—6).

FREE SECONDARY EDUCATION.

(See also E.—6—Table K5.)

Under the free-place regulations free places are divided into two classes—junior and senior—both being tenable at secondary schools and district high schools.

Boys and girls who qualify for Junior Education Board Scholarships, whether they obtain scholarships or not, are entitled to Junior Free Places, and those who pass the special examinations for free places are also participants in the privilege. Junior Free Places may, again, be obtained by those who qualify for a certificate of proficiency—that is, essentially pupils who pass with credit the Sixth Standard of the public-school syllabus; but on this qualification the age of the candidate must not exceed fifteen years. Generally speaking, Junior Free Places are tenable for two years, with a possible extension in certain cases to three years without examination. In the case of district high schools they are tenable to the age of seventeen.

A Senior Free Place is tenable by any pupil who has passed the Civil Service Junior Examination or the Intermediate Examination, the latter of which is regarded as the special examination for Senior Free Places. Both these examinations are held simultaneously, and differ mainly in the fact that in the Intermediate Examination different papers are set in certain subjects to meet the requirements of non-competitive candidates. The passing of the Matriculation Examination is also regarded as a qualification for a Senior Free Place. But in a largely increasing number of cases Senior Free Places may now be obtained without the necessity of having recourse to an external examination. By a recent amendment in the regulations the Minister has been empowered to award Senior Free Places to eligible scholars who have satisfactorily completed a two-years course in a secondary school or district high school in accordance with the specified conditions, and are recommended by the Principal of the secondary school attended, or, in the case of a district high school, by an Inspector of the district, such recommendation being subject to the concurrence of the Inspector-General of Schools. Senior Free Places are tenable up to the age of nineteen.

For free places granted in secondary schools in accordance with regulations grants are payable on a sliding scale, in which the capitation payments vary according to the income of the school from public endowments, and are calculated in such a way as to secure to the school for each free pupil under instruction an annual income from public sources and from endowments taken together of not less than £12 10s. per pupil, which is estimated to be sufficient to cover the necessary expenditure.