

About 70 per cent. of the district high schools are now provided with well-equipped laboratories. Where laboratories are not available it has been found practicable in the case of some of the public schools to provide useful courses in physical measurements such as can be carried out under ordinary class-room conditions. About 370 approved classes for various branches of elementary science, chiefly physics and chemistry, were held at public schools during the year.

The number of approved classes for swimming and life-saving continues to increase slowly. During the year 257 classes were held, as compared with 254 for the previous year.

STAFFS OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

The number of teachers in the public schools, exclusive of those employed in the secondary departments of district high schools, in December, 1914, and December, 1915, respectively, was as follows:—

NUMBER OF TEACHERS EMPLOYED IN PRIMARY DEPARTMENTS OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

			1914.			1915.		
			Men.	Women.	Total.	Men.	Women.	Total.
Adult teachers	..	..	1,628	2,820	4,448	1,591	3,077	4,668
Pupil-teachers	..	..	139	470	609*	141	485	626†
Totals	..	..	1,767	3,290	5,057	1,732	3,562	5,294
<i>Number of Adult Teachers (included above).</i>								
Head teachers	..	..	771	113	884	792	129	921
Sole teachers	..	..	483	829	1,312	426	889	1,315
Assistants	..	..	374	1,878	2,252	373	2,059	2,432
Totals	..	..	1,628	2,820	4,448	1,591	3,077	4,668

* Exclusive of 45 male and 278 female probationers.

† Exclusive of 53 male and 343 female probationers.

NOTE.—The number of sole teachers does not agree with the number of sole-teacher schools because of the fact that there are a number of half-time schools groups of which are in charge of a sole teacher, and also a number of side schools the teachers of which are not regarded as sole teachers. Similarly, on account of side schools, the number of head teachers does not agree with the number of schools of two or more teachers.

The number of pupils per teacher in the several grades or groups of schools is shown below, two pupil-teachers being counted as equivalent to one adult teacher, and probationers not being included on the staff.

	Average Number of Children per Teacher.
Grades 0 and I (1–20 in average attendance, one teacher)	.. 12·6
Grade II (21–35, one teacher)	.. 25·9
Grades II–VII (over 20, one or more teachers)	.. 36·4
Grades III–VII (over 35, two or more teachers)	.. 37·9
Grades V–VII (over 240, six or more teachers)	.. 45·6
All schools	.. 32·5

The Education Act of 1914 provides for an immediate small improvement and an ultimate improvement of considerable extent in the staffing of schools. The scale of staffing under earlier Acts was one teacher for each 40 or part of 40 children up to 200 in average attendance, then one additional teacher for each 50 or part of 50, pupil-teachers being included in the reckoning. The scale in the new Act gives one teacher for each 40 or part of 40 up to 400 in average attendance, and then one additional teacher for each 50 or part of 50, pupil-teachers to be ultimately excluded. For the year 1915 a small reduction in the number of pupils per teacher from 33·1 to 32·5 is shown, but it is obvious that further progress in the desired direction must be arrested till more favourable conditions exist. The matter depends primarily on the available supply of certificated and experienced teachers, but cannot be disassociated from the question of increased expenditure on salaries and buildings that even a small advance must entail. The classes in the large schools are still much too large, and it must be recognized that finality in this matter cannot be reached until the number of pupils per teacher has been reduced to the maximum, permitting of the introduction of the best methods of instruction.