

which frequently have a commercial, agricultural, or domestic bias. From an examination of the subjects taken by pupils it appears that Latin is now taken by only 52 per cent. of the boys and by 34 per cent. of the girls; French is studied by 76 per cent. of the boys and by 91 per cent. of the girls; agriculture is taken by 709 boys; commercial subjects by 1,699 boys, or 31 per cent., and by 734 girls; woodwork is taken by 530 boys, and cookery or needlework by 1,789 girls. The fact that some of the subjects mentioned are studied during only a portion of the time spent at the secondary school results in a smaller percentage appearing to study such subjects than is actually the case.

In district high schools subjects bearing more or less directly on rural pursuits and domestic life are given prominence. Sixty-two per cent. of the boys take agricultural science, 31 per cent. dairy-work, 55 per cent. woodwork, and 80 per cent. chemistry and physics; while 40 per cent. of the girls take domestic science, and 56 per cent. needlework and cookery. It cannot be said, however, that the rural course is very popular, parents appearing to prefer their children to follow the ordinary programme of work prescribed for public examinations. The task of providing courses both for pupils who intend to continue their scholastic career and for those shortly entering upon some vocation constitutes the difficulty of district high schools where the number of pupils is not sufficiently large to warrant the employment of staffs of teachers numerous enough to teach the wide range of subjects required.

HOSTELS FOR PUPILS OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS.

(Table K6 in E.-6.)

The Department has unfortunately been unable to give as much financial assistance as was desirable towards the cost of the erection of hostels in connection with secondary schools; nevertheless, several hostels were enlarged during the year, and some for which grants had previously been approved are now in course of erection. Twenty-seven hostels were open in 1920—one more than in the previous year—1,296 boys and 378 girls of the secondary departments and 291 pupils of the lower departments being accommodated in them. Of the boys 380 were at Christ's College, Christchurch, and the Wanganui Collegiate School. In addition to these numbers, 82 pupils were boarding in homes approved by the Principals, and 641 were boarding privately. For these last-named, and also for the large number of children prevented from attending school owing to the boarding difficulty, or forced to make long railway journeys daily, additional accommodation where there is dependable supervision and desirable environment is urgently needed.

FREE SECONDARY EDUCATION.

(Table K4 in E.-6.)

Free secondary education is provided on an extensive scale, junior and senior free places being tenable at secondary schools and district high schools, or, under somewhat different conditions, at technical schools.

Generally speaking, junior free places are tenable for two years, with a possible extension in certain cases to three years. In the case of their being held at district high schools they are tenable to the age of seventeen. The means of qualification are—

- (1.) For entrance to secondary schools and district high schools—
 - (a) Special examinations for Junior National Scholarships, (b) the certificate of proficiency.
- (2.) For entrance to technical high schools the means of qualification named in (1), or the certificate of competency in S6, with a special endorsement of merit in handwork or in elementary science, which for the purposes of technical schools is deemed to be equivalent to a certificate of proficiency.
- (3.) For entrance to technical classes other than technical high schools the means of qualification named in (1) or (2), or, under special conditions applicable to industrial courses only, a recommendation by the Inspector of Schools if a pupil is over fourteen years.