

SECONDARY-SCHOOL CERTIFICATES.

Three classes of certificates may be issued to free-place holders taking a secondary course of instruction. The intermediate certificate may be granted to junior-free-place holders who have satisfactorily completed under certain conditions a two-year course at a secondary school, district high school, or technical high school, and who in general are qualified in attainment to receive a senior free place. The lower leaving-certificate may be issued to pupils who have satisfactorily completed a three-years course of secondary instruction, including not less than one year of a senior course in which the standard of work is sufficiently advanced in character to meet the requirements of the examination for a teacher's certificate of Class D, or of the Matriculation Examination. Likewise the higher leaving-certificate may be granted to pupils having satisfactorily completed at least a four-years course of secondary instruction and having satisfied the requirements of the lower leaving-certificate, and, in addition, having completed to good advantage and under certain conditions a further secondary course of not less than one year. The following are the numbers of certificates awarded in 1912 (the year of their institution), in 1920, and in 1921 :—

	1912.	1920.	1921.
Higher leaving-certificates awarded	64	307	305
Lower leaving-certificates awarded	32	270	255
Applications for certificates declined	20	93	80
Total number of applications	116	670	640

STAFFS OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS.

(Table K3.)

The number of full-time teachers on the staffs of secondary schools at the end of 1921 was 405, as compared with 400 in the previous year. This number includes 20 male and 13 female principals and 191 male and 181 female assistants. In addition a number of part-time teachers were employed. The staffing of schools now being controlled by regulation, the average number of pupils to each assistant teacher in the various schools is fairly uniform, and, taking the highest roll during the year of all schools, works out at twenty-seven pupils per assistant teacher.

The second annual classified list of assistant teachers was issued at the end of the year, and of the twenty-one appeals against classification four were allowed. That so little exception was taken to the work of the classifying officers is a tribute to the manner in which the many difficulties connected with the new scheme were overcome. Of the total number of assistants, 18 per cent. are classified in the highest grade (Grade A), 23 per cent. in Grade B, 28 per cent. in Grade C, and 31 per cent. in the lowest grade (Grade D). Some of the smaller schools have been unable to obtain teachers possessing the required classification to fill the vacant positions on their staffs, the difficulty being due partly to the fact that the number of teachers classified in the higher grades is comparatively small, and partly to the disinclination of teachers for various reasons to move to the smaller centres. On the other hand, the complaint is made by women teachers, especially, that some of their number are holding positions of a lower grade than they are qualified to fill, to which the answer is that the service is hard to find in which a higher position is immediately available for every member as his qualifications improve, and also that the present proposals for a reorganized system of secondary education will provide a much wider scope for the activities of secondary teachers.

Provision for the training of secondary-school teachers is still inadequate, and although a certain number of young teachers now take a training-college course, it is frequently necessary to appoint to the junior classes teachers with high academic status but no training in methods of teaching. The effect on the pupils of these classes who have just left the hands of highly trained teachers in the primary schools cannot be other than unsatisfactory. In some of the larger schools the heads of departments now devote special attention to directing the work of the junior teachers, arranging schemes of work for them, and suggesting generally methods of teaching. The position will not, however, be entirely satisfactory until it is possible to ensure that every secondary-school teacher receives an adequate training in the art of teaching. Reforms in this direction have been under consideration for some time and will be given effect to when financial conditions permit.