

LENGTH OF POST-PRIMARY COURSE.

The returns compiled by teachers show also the duration of the post-primary course taken by pupils who have now left school. Summarized, the position is as follows :—

	Secondary Schools.		District High Schools.		Technical High and Technical Day Schools.		All Schools.	
	Number.	Per Cent.	Number.	Per Cent.	Number.	Per Cent.	Number.	Per Cent.
Leaving in first year	948	19	611	38	1,275	37	2,834	28
Leaving in second year	1,503	30	488	31	1,267	37	3,258	33
Leaving in third year	1,097	22	241	15	597	17	1,935	19
Leaving in fourth and later years..	1,447	29	256	16	327	9	2,030	20
Totals	4,995	100	1,596	100	3,466	100	10,057	100

From the above figures the average length of school life in the three classes of post-primary schools can be obtained approximately by dividing the total school life of all pupils leaving during the year by the total number of such pupils. For the purposes of this computation the school life of children leaving in the fourth and later years has been taken as four years, since the separate figures for each year after the third are not obtained by the Department. For this reason the average lengths of school life shown below will probably be one to two months lower than is actually the case.

	Average Length of School Life.	
	Years.	Months.
Secondary schools	2	7
District high schools	2	1
Technical high and technical day schools	2	0
All schools	2	4

The average school life of pupils in secondary schools in England and Wales is, according to the Board of Education Report for 1928, 4 years 1 month. It must be understood, however, that the English secondary schools admit a very large number of pupils who in New Zealand would be relegated to the primary schools. It is also explained in the report that of the schools concerned in the calculation of this average the majority are schools the bulk of whose pupils do not stay beyond the end of the school year in which they reach the age of sixteen years, and many leave at an earlier date. Warning is given that care should, therefore, be taken in drawing inferences from the average stated, in the absence of analytical information of a kind which cannot be presented in a purely statistical table.

It appears certain, however, that although for the reason given above the average length of stay at secondary schools in England is considerably longer than in New Zealand, there would appear to be little difference in the average age at which pupils leave post-primary schools in the two countries. In England and Wales the greater number of entrants to secondary schools are of ages 11 years and 12 years, so that the average leaving-age is between 15 plus and 16 plus. In New Zealand the greater number of entrants to secondary schools are 13 years or 14 years of age, and, taking the average length of stay at these schools as 2 plus, the average age of leaving post-primary schools in New Zealand is between 15 plus and 16 plus.

In the case of pupils who commence on post-primary courses and leave during the same year, the Department has been furnished with information showing in months the duration of the period of attendance of such pupils, and this information is tabulated below. The totals shown in the table are slightly below those shown as leaving in the first year in the table immediately preceding. This difference is due to the fact that the table below concerns only pupils who commenced and terminated their post-primary courses in the same year, while the table above includes under "first year" pupils who, though in the first year of a post-primary course when they left, actually commenced that course in a previous calendar year or at a private secondary school.