

It is interesting to note that in 1930 the diminution of primary-school roll numbers experienced during the past three years affected the numbers of children leaving school, for, as stated above, 21,715 children definitely left primary school in 1930, whereas in the previous year the number was 23,022, and in 1929 23,742.

DESTINATION OF PUPILS LEAVING PRIMARY SCHOOLS.

The Department again obtained from public schools, through the Education Boards, returns as to the destination of pupils leaving school. A summary of the returns showing the number of pupils who left last year is given in the following table :—

PROBABLE DESTINATION OF PUPILS LEAVING PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS DURING OR AT END OF YEAR 1930.

Destination.	Had passed Standard VI.		Had not passed Standard VI.		Totals.			
	Boys.	Girls.	Boys.	Girls.	Boys.		Girls.	
					Number.	Per Cent.	Number.	Per Cent.
Post-primary	5,748	5,406	211	175	5,959	53	5,581	53
Commercial occupations—								
(a) Clerical (including typing) ..	57	35	14	22	71	1	57	1
(b) Shop and warehouse assistants	190	87	80	48	270	2	135	1
Trades—								
(a) Engineering	84	..	25	..	109	1	..	..
(b) Building	38	..	39	3	77	1	3	*
(c) Other	128	28	69	29	197	2	57	..
Agricultural and pastoral ..	1,434	105	993	84	2,427	22	189	2
Other occupations	357	225	302	235	659	6	460	4
Home	657	2,473	378	1,394	1,035	9	3,867	36
Not known	127	85	189	161	316	3	246	3
Total number of children leaving	8,820	8,444	2,300	2,151	11,120	100	10,595	100

* No significant percentage.

The outstanding feature of the following table is that the percentages of pupils (boys) proceeding to various destinations on leaving primary school last year have varied from those of the past two years in so far as the two main destinations—post-primary and agricultural and pastoral—are concerned. It will be seen that an increase of 2 per cent. has been recorded under both these heads, and, moreover, under the next largest heading—home—an increase of 1 per cent. is recorded when compared with the percentage last year. In the case of girls leaving school, the most marked movement is in the increase in the percentage of those remaining at home on completion of the primary-school course. All of this goes to show that, when commercial trades and other occupations are unable to increase their activities and thus dispense with accretions in the way of staffs due to the financial depression, parents are more or less forced into choice between two alternatives regarding their children—namely, a post-primary course or remain at home. It is felt that the increase in the number of boys entering agricultural and pastoral pursuits is due to parents enlisting the aid of their sons at an earlier age than they would otherwise do if their financial position would permit them to engage outside help.

Unfortunately, that very useful publication, “Careers,” issued by the Department for the assistance of parents in choosing a vocation for their children was not, on account of the expense involved, published last year.