

Under the National Scholarship scheme pupils of public schools have also the chance of obtaining a Junior National scholarship, tenable for three years, or in special cases for a longer period. These scholarships, of a more uniform value than the Education Board scholarships, and generally on a level with the best of those scholarships, are awarded on the results of an examination conducted annually by the Education Department, and the examination is now in nearly all the districts adopted by the Education Boards for the award of their own scholarships. The actual award of Junior National scholarships is also intrusted to the Education Boards, who exercise a certain control over the holders and pay over to them from time to time the amounts falling due.

At the end of 1907 the number of Junior National scholarships current was 90, 72 of which were held at secondary schools and 18 at district high schools. Of this number, 30 were in the first year of their currency, 29 in the second year, 18 in the third year, and 13 in the fourth year. Forty-eight of the scholarships were of the annual value of £10, and 42 of £40, with free tuition added in all cases. Apart from fees otherwise accounted for under the heading of free-place expenditure, the cost of Junior National scholarships for the year was £2,314. The total cost of scholarships (Board and National) for 1907 thus amounted to £10,861.

The examination for Junior National scholarships, with which is associated the special examination for junior free places in secondary schools, district high schools, and technical schools, is held annually in December. For this examination in 1907 entries were received from 1,475 candidates seeking to qualify for the Junior National scholarships, for Education Board Junior scholarships, for Junior Queen's scholarships in connection with the Middle University District, or simply for the free places. In 1906 the number of entries received was 1,458; in 1905, 870. On the results of the examination 682 of the candidates qualified for a scholarship award, and in addition 148 satisfied the conditions for free places.

Supplementing the provisions for scholarships, the arrangements now in force, by which pupils of fair promise are admitted to free tuition in secondary and other schools, are very comprehensive and far-reaching in their effects. For all who deserve it there is now a free course from the initiatory stages of the primary school to the doors of the University, and by means of further scholarships and bursaries, making classes at the Colleges free to all duly qualified students, a further step of progress to the distinction of a University degree is also possible in terms of similar advantage.

Under the Regulations for Free Places in secondary schools and district high schools boys and girls who qualify for Junior scholarships, whether they obtain scholarships or not, or pass a special examination for free places, or who obtain certificates of proficiency at the completion of their primary course, become eligible generally for the privilege of two years' free tuition, with a possible extension to a third year without further examination.

At the end of the period a further free place is obtainable to the age of nineteen by all who succeed in passing the Civil Service Junior Examination, either in its competitive form or, as slightly modified for the purpose in question, in the form of a qualifying examination only. The Matriculation Examination of the University may also be used for this purpose, and those qualifying for Senior Board scholarships, whether by means of the Department's examination or not, are also eligible. As, however, various reasons exist in the interests both of the pupil and of the school for dispensing with an external examination whenever this can be done with convenience and safety, arrangements are now being made for applying to senior free places in a modified shape the principle of the "accrediting" system, which has for some time been growing in favour with educational authorities elsewhere, and which forms commonly a characteristic feature of Continental and American schools. Hereafter, on the joint recommendation of the principal of the school attended (or, in the case of district high schools, of an Inspector of the district) and of the Inspector-General of Schools, it will be possible for a free pupil who has gone through a satisfactory course of work of sufficient scope to secure without the restrictions of an intermediate public examination free secondary education throughout the whole course of his attendance at a secondary school up to the age of nineteen years.

Beyond the limits of the secondary school the opportunities given to promising students are now also great. Besides the scholarships offered by the University, there have in the past year been available four Senior National scholarships in each of the four University districts, four Senior Queen's scholarships, on terms of a similar character in connection with Victoria College, and one or more Taranaki scholarships under special enactment, making a total of some thirty-six scholarships of very substantial value offered at the close of 1907 on the results of the Junior Scholarship examination of the University.

University bursaries, covering free tuition at University college classes for a period of three years, are also offered out of the public funds to all who obtain credit in the Junior University Scholarship examination, and otherwise possess the qualifications for a National scholarship without obtaining one. With these provisions there can be few indeed entitled to special consideration who are deterred from a University course by the question of the cost of classes. On account of Senior National (including Queen's) scholarships and University bursaries there was paid during the year a sum of £1,320, of which £1,010 consisted of fixed scholarship allowances and £310 was in refund or remission of fees.

At the end of 1907 the secondary schools giving free tuition to duly qualified pupils, and receiving grants therefor under section 87 of the Education Act, numbered twenty-six, as against twenty-three for the previous year. The total number of pupils on the roll of these schools was 3,579, and of this total 2,468 (1,335 boys and 1,133 girls), or 70 per cent. of the roll-number, were given free places under the regulations for free places at a mean average cost to the Treasury of £8 13s. 6d. per pupil; the approximate annual rate as determined on the payments for the last term of the year being £21,596. In 1906 the number of such free pupils was 2,435, and the approximate annual rate £21,240, with a mean capitation of £8 17s. 4d. per pupil. In addition,