

free tuition was given to 245 holders of scholarships or exhibitions granted by these schools, by Boards of Education (in some circumstances), or by endowed secondary schools not coming under the conditions, making the total number of free places held at secondary schools 2,735, as against 2,770 for 1906.

Further, however, in reckoning the amount of free secondary education in the Dominion must be included an almost equal number of pupils in attendance at the secondary classes of district high schools. As shown below, there were on the roll of the secondary departments of these schools 2,452 pupils who had passed through the elementary school course and were in receipt of secondary instruction not differing materially in character from the instruction given in the secondary schools. All but a comparatively small number of these were free pupils within the meaning of the regulations for free places, receiving free tuition at a total cost to the Government in salaries of £19,961, and an average annual cost per pupil enrolled of £8 2s. 10d. There is thus an approximate total of 5,187 pupils receiving free secondary education, exclusive of those holding free places at technical schools.

The number of district high schools in operation at the end of 1907 was 64, as against 61 for 1906, and 59 for 1905. In the secondary departments of these schools the teachers employed, apart from the principals who may or may not have taken part in the secondary instruction, but whose added responsibility is in all cases recognised by some increment of salary, numbered 101, and the number of pupils in attendance was 2,452—an increase of 2 teachers, and a decrease of 142 pupils. In 1905 a very substantial rise in the attendance had to be noted; the present movement in the opposite direction may be attributed to various causes, among which increased facilities for higher education in other directions and somewhat stricter tests of admission have doubtless much to do.

The total annual rate of salaries paid to the teachers of district high schools on the basis of the last quarter of 1907, over and above the amounts payable in respect of ordinary primary schools of similar average, was £20,073, of which a sum of £1,033, payable only to present occupants in virtue of earlier arrangements, is not of the nature of a permanent charge. The remainder, £19,040, represents the present annual cost of secondary education in these schools, and may be compared with the totals of £18,484 for 1906 and £13,854 for 1905. With a further deduction from the amount for 1907 in respect to allowances to principal teachers, under Part VI of the Fourth Schedule to the Act, the average salary of secondary assistants at the close of the year was £167 2s. 7d. The average salary actually paid to secondary assistants at the close of the year was £171 10s. 11d.

The programme followed in the upper departments of district high schools embraces generally a secondary course in English, mathematics (including arithmetic), and science. Where possible, handwork is also included, and in many cases Latin, French, geography, and history are taken up by a greater or less proportion of the pupils. With few exceptions—the secondary departments attached to the training colleges for teachers in the four chief centres, two other schools in Wellington, one in Christchurch, and one in Wanganui—the schools are really rural schools, situated in the smaller boroughs or in townships without any of the features of urban environment, and it is to be hoped that as opportunities occur every effort will be made to adapt the course of study accordingly. In many cases steps in this direction have already been taken, and with the introduction of more teachers on the staff of these schools who have been trained on modern lines a further extension of the work in the direction of agricultural science for agricultural districts, chemistry, or geology and allied knowledge for mining centres, and some branch of handwork to cultivate manual dexterity in all, could be profitably undertaken.

The difficulty at present experienced of finding suitable teachers who will be content to remain long enough in such a position is undoubtedly great; but that so many are secured well equipped in point of attainment for the work they have to do is already a ground for much gratification. Exclusive of the principals of the schools, some thirty of whom possess University degrees, 64 of those employed are graduates, several holding degrees in both arts and science, 20 have a Class C certificate, and 9 a certificate of Class D, out of a total number of 101.

TABLE K.—DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOLS: STAFF, SALARIES, ETC., IN SECONDARY DEPARTMENTS, 1907.

Education District.	Number of Schools.	Number of Teachers (including Head Teachers).	Number of Pupils.			Amounts paid in Salaries during the Year.					
			M.	F.	Total.	From Receipts from Government.	From other Sources.	Total.			
									£	s.	d.
Auckland	10	25	191	188	379	2,730	16	8	2,730	16	8
Taranaki	1	4	64	29	93	560	4	0	560	4	0
Wanganui	6	15	110	88	198	1,682	18	8	24	0	0
Wellington	10	31	226	279	505	4,250	8	4	..	..	..
Hawke's Bay	3	8	30	44	74	928	0	5	75	0	0
Nelson	4	9	67	73	140	827	10	0	..	..	..
Grey	1	3	16	22	38	355	0	0	60	0	0
Westland	1	3	17	18	35	339	3	4	168	6	8
North Canterbury	9	22	219	157	376	2,916	19	6	100	0	0
South Canterbury	4	10	66	60	126	1,364	8	0	..	..	..
Otago	10	24	172	179	351	2,945	4	11	..	..	..
Southland	5	11	65	72	137	1,060	0	0	..	..	..
Totals for 1907	64	165	1,248	1,209	2,452	19,960	13	10	427	6	8
" 1906	61	160	1,331	1,263	2,594	19,070	7	6	466	9	8