

- (2.) The charging of a fee for Public Service Entrance Examination, the fee being refunded to successful candidates on their appointment to the Public Service.
- (3.) The admission of girls to examination for Public Service Entrance after the lapse of several years during which only boy candidates were admitted.
- (4.) The Public Service Commissioner's announcement of his intention to discontinue the Public Service Senior Examination.
- (5.) The concession of permitting teachers to take a single group of the Class D Examination at one time by the amendment of the regulations of the 11th September, 1916. This concession applied to last examination.

The numbers of candidates who actually presented themselves in the examination-room are given below. For the sake of comparison the figures for the previous three years are also given.

	1913-14.	1914-15.	1915-16.	1916-17.
Junior National Scholarships and junior free places ...	3,154	3,562	3,973	4,403
Public Service Entrance, Senior National Scholarships, and Intermediate ... ..	2,756	2,739	3,022	3,839
Teachers D and C ... ..	1,524	1,576	1,720	1,941
Public Service Senior ... ..	871	804	675	653
Typists' Examination ... ..	...	46	51	50
Kindergarten Certificate Examination ... ..	...	...	8	5
London University Examinations ... ..	...	...	2	1
Froebel Union Examination ... ..	...	...	2	2
	8,305	8,727	9,453	10,894

A practice has been growing up of entering candidates for both the certificate of proficiency examination and the Department's special examination for junior free places. Last year no less than 1,916 pupils sat for the latter examination, and as the majority of these had the chance to qualify for junior free places on the results of the former examination it has been decided to prevent this unnecessary duplication in future by abolishing the special Junior Free Place Examination. Those who on account of age are unable to qualify for a free place at the Proficiency Examination will be given the opportunity of obtaining the qualification in the examination for Junior National Scholarships.

The number of failures in the last Junior National Scholarship and Free Place Examinations—2,815 out of 4,403—indicates that head teachers are not exercising due discretion in selecting candidates. A great deal of unnecessary work is thus thrown upon the Department in examining candidates most of whom by the discreet interference of the teacher responsible might have been saved the ordeal of sitting for examinations for which they were not prepared.

Candidates for Senior National Scholarships again had the option of being examined under a programme (scheme A) corresponding to the usual secondary-school course, or under an alternative one (scheme B) intended to suit candidates who have been taking courses with an agricultural or domestic bias. The regulations were amended in September, 1916, to help scheme B candidates by doubling the maximum marks for laboratory work or outdoor work in field and garden. Further encouragement will be given to pupils taking the more practical courses in secondary schools by the Public Service Commissioner's decision to include woodwork and metal-work in the list of subjects for the next Public Service Entrance Examination.

The standards of qualification for the year, fixed in accordance with the provisions of the Act, were 62½ per cent. for juniors and 65 per cent. for seniors. In the case of junior scholarship candidates from one-teacher schools the standard of qualification was fixed at its lowest limit allowable by regulation—viz., 10 per cent. below the ordinary standard.