

Owing to the financial position all that is desired has not yet been accomplished and a few large schools are still without hostels, while at other schools the hostels are too small. In nearly every instance the hostels are now controlled by the Boards of Governors, and from the balance-sheets to hand of eighteen such hostels it appears that twelve made a profit and six a loss on the year's working. The profits ranged in individual cases from 2 per cent to 23 per cent. of the income, and the losses from 1 per cent. to 41 per cent., the average profit on all hostels being 5 per cent. of the income. In the few cases where heavy losses were made there was some fault in the administration, which is being pointed out to the controlling Board with a view to having it remedied. The hostels vary greatly in size, the smallest accommodating only ten pupils and the largest 145 (excluding Christ's College, Christchurch, and Wanganui Collegiate School, which between them accommodate 335 boys). At the hostels attached to the public secondary schools a total of 838 boys and 354 girls of the secondary departments were accommodated and 180 lower-department pupils. In addition to these numbers, 57 pupils were boarding at establishments approved by the Principals, and 633 were boarding privately. For these last-named, and also for the large number of country children prevented from attending school owing to the boarding difficulty, or forced to make long railway journeys daily, accommodation where there is dependable supervision and desirable environment should be provided as circumstances permit.

FREE SECONDARY EDUCATION.

(Table K4 in E-6.)

Free secondary education is provided on an extensive scale, junior and senior free places being tenable at secondary schools, district high schools, technical high schools, and other technical schools.

Generally speaking, junior free places are tenable for two years, with a possible extension in certain cases to three years. In the case of their being held at district high schools they are tenable for three years. The means of qualification are—

- (1.) For entrance to secondary schools—(a) Special examination for Junior National Scholarships, (b) the certificate of proficiency.
- (2.) For entrance to technical high schools and district high schools the means of qualification named in (1), or the certificate of competency in S6, with a special endorsement of merit in handwork or in elementary science, which for the purposes of these schools is deemed to be equivalent to a certificate of proficiency.

A recent amendment in the regulations provides for the award of free places in any type of secondary school to specially recommended proficiency-certificate holders over the prescribed age of fifteen years. It is agreed that such pupils should as a rule take up a somewhat practical course of instruction, and that they should preferably enter a technical or a technical high school. Children who have been retarded owing to their living in the country or other external circumstances, and those who, although not bright in literary work, show sufficient merit in other subjects to warrant a continued education, are thus provided for.

Senior free places are tenable at secondary schools, district high schools, and technical high schools up to the age of nineteen, and at technical classes other than technical high schools for three or in some cases four years. The means of qualification for senior free places are the Intermediate or other equivalent examinations, or the recommendation of the Principal or Director of the school or classes attended based on the school records and examination results, or the recommendation of an Inspector of Secondary Schools, or, in the case of district high schools, of the senior Inspector of the district, or in part on such a recommendation and in part on the results of a special examination. Recommendation is the qualification now frequently offered, the number receiving senior free places in this manner in 1922 being 2,609, representing nearly three-fifths of the total number of senior free places gained.

As a result of the free-place system 16,025 children were receiving free secondary education in 1922, an increase of 2,203 over the number for the previous year. Of this total 9,446 were in secondary schools, 2,492 in district high schools. 3,978