

SECONDARY-SCHOOL CERTIFICATES.

Three classes of certificates may be issued to free-place holders taking a secondary course of instruction. The intermediate certificate may be granted to junior-free-place holders who have satisfactorily completed under certain conditions a two-years course at a secondary school, district high school, or technical high school, and who in general are qualified in attainment to receive a senior free place. The lower leaving certificate may be issued to pupils who have satisfactorily completed a three-years course of secondary instruction, including not less than one year of a senior course in which the standard of work is sufficiently advanced in character to meet the requirements of the examination for a teacher's certificate of Class D, or of the Matriculation Examination. Likewise the higher leaving certificate may be granted to pupils having satisfactorily completed at least a four-years course of secondary instruction and having satisfied the requirements of the lower leaving certificate, and, in addition, having completed to good advantage and under certain conditions a further secondary course of not less than one year. The following are the numbers of certificates awarded in 1912 (the year of their institution), in 1921, and in 1922 :—

	1912.	1921.	1922.
Higher leaving certificates awarded	64	305	439
Lower leaving certificates awarded	32	255	240
Applications for certificates declined	20	80	102
Total number of applications	116	640	781

STAFFS OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS.

(Table K3.)

The number of full-time teachers on the staffs of secondary schools at the end of 1922 was 442, as compared with 405 in the previous year. This number includes 21 male and 13 female principals and 214 male and 194 female assistants. In addition a number of part-time teachers were employed. The staffing of schools now being controlled by regulation, the average number of pupils to each assistant teacher in the various schools is fairly uniform, and, taking the highest roll during the year of all schools, works out at twenty-seven pupils per assistant teacher.

Of the total number of assistants 19 per cent. are classified in the highest grade (Grade A), 23 per cent. in Grade B, 29 per cent. in Grade C, and 31 per cent. in Grade D. The difficulty of obtaining suitable teachers to fill positions in secondary schools has somewhat diminished so far as schools situated in the cities are concerned; there still remains, however, an inclination on the part of the teachers to avoid the country schools, which are experiencing serious difficulties in obtaining sufficiently qualified teachers.

It has not yet been possible to carry into effect the Department's plans for the training of secondary-school teachers. The establishment of a Chair of Education at each of the University colleges will, however, result in many prospective secondary-school teachers including this subject in their University course, and thus equipping themselves more effectively for their proposed vocation. Good work continues to be done among the junior teachers in many of the larger secondary schools, where the heads of departments assist them in arranging schemes of work and generally in improving their methods of teaching.

The head teacher of a district high school controls the secondary department and takes some part in the instruction, receiving on that account an addition to his ordinary salary of from £30 to £50 according to the number of pupils in the secondary department. Special assistants are also employed for the secondary departments; in 1922 there were 117 such assistants—47 men and 70 women. In these schools, especially the more remote ones, considerable difficulty is experienced in obtaining the services of fully qualified assistants. Even with the assistance in some cases of itinerant instructors the task of covering the wide curriculum of the district high school is no small one to be undertaken by one or two assistants. In addition, the prospects of promotion are not so good as in the ordinary secondary schools, so that, as at present constituted, district high schools do not offer positions of the most tempting nature to teachers qualified in secondary work.