

heard of the agricultural work being done at Napier, and we were pleased indeed to find such good work being done there. We would like to express our congratulations to the Headmaster of the Napier Boys' High School on the excellent agricultural course his school is providing, and which is a credit to him and to Mr. Midgley. We hope that the Headmaster will take every opportunity of having it extended. Every encouragement should be given, wherever possible, to the establishment of farms attached to high schools in country areas. In addition to this, we consider that much more of an agricultural bias could be given to general education in New Zealand. More could be done to teach the children the prime importance of the land to the welfare of New Zealand. Though their future vocation may lie far removed from farming, this would make them more readily understand and appreciate the difficulties which confront the farmer, and which are therefore most important for the nation and its people to have solved.

(xi) ADULT EDUCATION

We would like to endorse the recommendations of the Consultative Committee on Adult Education, and to express the hope that everything possible will be done to extend adult education in remote country areas.

4. TELEPHONES

Another adjunct of life in a rural community which is most important is the telephone service. In the country where homesteads are often at great distances from each other a telephone is of much more importance than it is in closely-settled areas, where, if necessary, it is possible to reach within a short time a neighbour's house. It is unfortunate that in the last ten years there has been little change in the availability of telephones for the people of the back country. The present policy of the Post and Telegraph Department is towards installing a system of rural automatic exchanges throughout New Zealand. We endorse that policy as being a very good one, both for the Department and for the country people. It is realized that it will take some considerable time to obtain complete national coverage, but it is well worth-while, and will make a great difference when the system is completed. In the meantime, a policy of centralization of the smaller exchanges might give longer operating hours or, if possible, continuous service. Eventually all the small manual exchanges, if not linked directly to a rural automatic exchange, should be switched through as an emergency line connected to the rural automatic when the local exchange is closed. Under present conditions it would make a vast difference if the telephone exchange in remote areas could be open, even if only for an hour in the morning and the evening, on Saturdays and Sundays, in addition to during the week. In many of these areas the switching is done in the local store, and it may possibly be necessary for the Post and Telegraph Department to give to the telephonist an allowance for remaining on duty during these periods. We consider, however, that it is a matter of considerable importance and well worth-while, as it would make it possible for contact to be made with doctors or district nurses in cases of emergency during the week-end. Where there is at present no telephone service, the Marginal Lands Board should give consideration to reasonable financial assistance towards the installation of such, as it is very expensive under present conditions.