

Continuation classes in agriculture and dairy-work in connection with district high schools should be arranged wherever practicable, due consideration being given to the time of the year and the hours of the day when such classes can be carried on with least inconvenience to farm-work.

It is further recommended that as soon as the attendance in the secondary department of a district high school in an agricultural or pastoral district reaches an average of eighty an agricultural high school should be established on the lines of those recently set up in Victoria and New South Wales.

Two agricultural colleges should be established in the Dominion—one in the North Island and one in the South Island—at which, in conjunction with the University colleges, practical work up to the Bachelor of Agriculture and Bachelor of Veterinary Science standards might be undertaken. Shorter courses of study should be arranged in order to qualify Inspectors, teachers, and organizers in the different branches of agriculture, directors of dairy schools, &c. Lincoln College might well undertake this work for the South Island, while the college to be established under the recent Campbell bequest in the Auckland District might, with Government assistance, satisfy the needs of the North Island.

THE SYLLABUS.

On the question of the efficiency of the present primary-school system and the syllabus generally, an immense amount of evidence, much of which is remarkably conflicting, has been taken. Some witnesses have given it as their opinion that the children leaving our primary schools to-day are not as well grounded in the essentials of a primary-school education as were the pupils of ten or fifteen years ago. On the other hand, many have asserted quite as confidently that the boys and girls of to-day are just as well grounded, and are, moreover, more resourceful and more self-reliant than were the scholars of a decade since. The weight of the recorded testimony on the whole is in support of the latter view.

Teachers and Inspectors have expressed almost unanimous approval of the aim and scope of the present syllabus, and it appears evident that any apparent weakness has been the result of misunderstanding and misinterpretation on the part of many teachers and Inspectors. While the Commission concurs in this view of the syllabus, it is strongly of opinion that the time has come when it is advisable to make alterations and modifications, in order to impress upon all concerned the paramount importance of paying the utmost attention to those essentials which, in a primary-school course should ever be the first consideration.

1. *Speech*.—In order to counteract the tendency amongst young people towards slovenliness in speech, indistinct utterance, and impurity of vowel sounds, it is recommended that throughout the whole school course daily practice be given in correct methods of breathing, and in the right use of the tongue, lips, and teeth in speaking. Exercises, graduated to suit the classes from the infant department to Standard VI, having for their object the securing of purity of vowel-sounds, should be given daily. Teachers should be instructed to pay special attention to their own speech in order that their pupils may have, as far as possible, correct models for imitation.

2. *Reading*.—In Standards I, II, III, and IV, the Miscellaneous Reader is unnecessary, and even harmful, if every extract is treated as a task. The quantity of matter is so great that the cramming of all the lists of spelling and meanings, together with the explanation necessary occupies so much time as to leave little or none for supplementary reading. The result is that, instead of our children leaving the primary school with a real love for the reading of good literature, they frequently have an utter distaste for it. Your Commission strongly recommends that in Standards I, II, III, and IV the requirements of the syllabus in reading should be met by the use of the *School Journal*, together with Supplementary Readers. In this connection there should be provided in every schoolroom a book-case containing a supply of books selected from lists prepared by the Education Board and suited to the age of pupils in the respective standard classes. Several sets of Supplementary Readers—sufficient for the whole or part of the pupils in a class—should be provided. Silent reading, correlated with oral or written composition, geography, or history, should be encouraged. Children might also keep a