

1925.  
NEW ZEALAND.

# AGRICULTURAL INSTRUCTION IN NEW ZEALAND

(REPORT OF THE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE ON).

---

*Laid on the Table of the House of Representatives by Leave.*

---

## PREFACE.

---

### I. NOTES ON THE SYSTEM OF PUBLIC EDUCATION IN THE DOMINION, WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE PRESENT PROVISION FOR INSTRUCTION IN AGRICULTURAL SCIENCE.

THE general control of public education, and the inspection of all public primary, secondary, and technical schools are in the hands of the Education Department, which administers the funds provided by Parliament for educational purposes. The Department also controls directly the Native primary schools, and special schools of various kinds. The Department classifies all teachers and fixes all salaries, conducts examinations, prescribes syllabuses of instruction. The direct control of primary schools and district high schools is, however, in the hands of the Education Boards of the nine education districts, each school being also managed by a local School Committee under the Board. The Boards of Education are also in most cases controlling authorities of technical schools, which, however, are directly managed by more or less independent Technical School Boards wherever the importance of the school warrants the employment of a full-time staff. Secondary schools generally are controlled by independent Boards of Governors, subject, however, to the Act and regulations administered by the Education Department, which thus exercises a general supervision over all schools supported by public funds.

The total cost of public education in the Dominion amounts to about £3,250,000 per annum, of which less than £200,000 is provided from reserves revenue, over £3,000,000 being paid from parliamentary votes.

#### PRIMARY SCHOOLS.

Primary education is free and compulsory for children between the ages of seven and fourteen. The primary-school life of the children extends normally over a period of about eight years, between the ages of five and thirteen, but no child may leave school before gaining a Sixth Standard certificate of proficiency unless he has reached the age of fourteen years. Statutory provision exists for increasing the age-limit of compulsory attendance at school to fifteen years.

The primary-school syllabus includes subjects of instruction grouped under the general headings of—

- (1.) English—including oral and written expression.
- (2.) “Graphic” expression—including drawing and handwork.
- (3.) Arithmetic.
- (4.) Man and nature—including nature-study, geography, elementary science, and home science.
- (5.) Man and society—including history, civics, and moral instruction.
- (6.) Physical training—including physical exercises, swimming, and lessons on hygiene and health.

No attempt is made to treat any of the subjects from a vocational point of view, the aim of primary-school instruction in the subjects included under heading (4) not being directed towards any particular occupation, but rather towards awakening the interest of children in natural phenomena, inculcating a love of nature, and also giving an elementary training in scientific method.

The nature-study and elementary-science work in the primary schools is, however, generally supervised by instructors who have had special training in agriculture and agricultural science, and in this way these studies are given a practical flavour, which is, moreover, reinforced by actual practical work in the school-garden, and, in some districts, in the home plot cultivated by the child in connection with agricultural-club competitions.