

The Dairy Division and the Horticulture Division—the latter handling matters connected with fruit-farming, horticulture generally, and beekeeping—were both practically self-contained, and they are continued as separate Divisions, and are not affected by the reorganization so far as any rearrangement of their functions is concerned. The Dairy Division has done very sound and excellent work, and a gradual expansion of its instructional function, particularly directed to the improvement in the quality of milk and cream sent to dairy factories, is being brought about. It is also proposed to make provision for the carrying-out of special bacteriological work in connection with the dairy industry. The scope of the Horticulture Division is being considerably extended. It is recognized that a great deal of additional work can be carried out with advantage in the direction of aiding fruitgrowers to deal with the various problems of their industry. For the purpose of gaining new information on practical lines the Assistant Director of the Division has been sent to America to investigate the control of disease, methods of marketing, the possibilities of an export trade, and matters connected with fruitgrowing, horticulture, and beekeeping generally.

The keynote of the policy under which the inspection work of the Department is carried out is to secure the co-operation of farmers in conserving and advancing their interests in the matter of their stock and crops, and the increase of production. The Acts which come within the scope of the Department's jurisdiction have to be administered efficiently, but every effort is made to carry out inspection duty on lines of co-operation rather than of compulsion.

The measures taken to merge the inspection of rabbits and noxious weeds with that of stock necessitated the practical disappearance of the Fields Division as such. In order, however, to maintain and extend the part of that Division's former functions dealing with experimental farms, local experimental areas, and fields instruction generally, a new branch is being built up. Pending the appointment of a permanent Director thereto this branch is in my direct charge, aided by the valuable co-operation of Mr. B. C. Aston and Mr. A. H. Cockayne. Special inquiries are being made for the purpose of securing for the position a man of high practical attainments combined with the necessary scientific knowledge, and with both demonstrative and instructional ability. It is realized that it is of the greatest importance to the Dominion to have these duties carried out on sound and progressive lines. On this branch devolves the responsibility not only of conducting the Department's experimental farms and the various experimental areas throughout the country to the best advantage, but also of dealing with agricultural education (apart from scholastic institutions).

OTHER DEVELOPMENTS.

The work of the Department is extending greatly in order to meet the growing desire of the agricultural and pastoral community for expert advice and assistance in all farming matters, and the need for further developing these industries with a view to increasing primary production must necessarily involve a still greater expansion of the Department's services.

The development of a more comprehensive and efficient scheme of general agricultural education is one of the greatest necessities of the Dominion at the present time. As it is, a very great deal of work is being done in this direction—much more, indeed, than the Department sometimes receives credit for. The Ruakura Farm especially is rapidly developing into an educational institution, largely the result of it being utilized for the purpose of training returned soldiers in special branches of outdoor work, also for special classes for teachers and for farmers, these latter being organized and carried out in co-operation with the Auckland Education Board. The Weraroa Farm has been undergoing a reorganization process within itself, and is now undertaking a new departure in educational work in connection with returned soldiers. The Moumahaki Farm has proved of considerable value to farmers in the surrounding district, practical demonstration-work being its special feature.

Steps are now being taken to give effect to a new general policy in connection with the experimental farms. Under this scheme a sufficient area on each farm will be set aside for experimental work planned on lines calculated to elucidate new facts and obtain new information. The remainder will be conducted as a demonstration farm in modern up-to-date methods, and be made profit-earning. Separate accounts will be kept for each branch of the farm, and annual balance-sheets, based on commercial principles, will be furnished. It is considered that the usefulness of these institutions to our farmers will be much enhanced by such means.

There is a strong demand throughout the Dominion for more experimental farms, but this demand has to be considered in connection with the whole question of agricultural education, of which