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NEW ZEALAND.

DEPARTMENT OF SCIENTIFIC AND INDUSTRIAL RESEARCH

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INTRODUCTION.

THE Department of Scientific and Industrial Research was established as the result of the growing realization that the future prosperity of the industries of the Dominion depended more than ever upon the assistance which scientific guidance could render. This realization led the Government in 1926 to seek a practical means for giving effect to this growing need. A number of proposals for dealing with the question had been put forward from time to time, but none was of such a comprehensive kind as to warrant its adoption. The Government accordingly decided to secure an outside opinion, and in 1926 invited Sir Frank Heath, of the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research of Great Britain, to visit the Dominion, and, with his experience of scientific organization already gained in Great Britain, to furnish a report and elaborate a scheme to meet the requirements of New Zealand. Accordingly Sir Frank Heath visited the Dominion and, after inspecting its industries and scientific facilities, furnished recommendations for an organized scheme of scientific and industrial research. These recommendations were given statutory effect by the Scientific and Industrial Research Act of 1926, which established a Council and Department of State charged with the duty of advising the Government upon matters of research into all phases of industry, and conferred executive powers for the promotion and pursuit of industrial investigations.

Upon the establishment of the Council in 1926 steps were taken to survey both the scientific needs of the industries of the Dominion and the facilities available for meeting these needs. The primary industries and those other industries closely connected therewith called for first attention, and accordingly investigations were established in connection with dairying, noxious weeds, mineral content of pastures, wheat, meat, seed and plant, and cold-storage problems.

The policy adopted has been that of co-operation in research, already proved as being very successful in Great Britain. This policy permits of the closest association and contact of representatives of industry with research workers and State Departments in the control and rewards of the investigations. Co-operation on an Imperial scale has also received attention, and has been made possible through the assistance rendered by the Empire Marketing Board by grants made to assist in a number of very important investigations.

The Department has sought to make use of such staff, accommodation, and scientific facilities as have already been established in the Dominion for the prosecution of research work, new establishments and organizations being set up only in those cases where such provision was absent. In this way care has been taken to avoid any unnecessary duplication and overlapping. The direction of the various researches has been delegated to a series of specialist committees comprised of representatives of industry, together with others from interested Departments of State and other institutions.

The provision of scientific assistance to a number of the Dominion's main industries has up to the present demanded a great deal of organization. The provision of adequate staff, funds, and facilities makes progress slow, but within the next year or so a considerable amount of actual research work will be in active progress. Nevertheless, a number of industries as yet remain without any scientific assistance, but in the course of time it is hoped that the Dominion will be provided with