

AGRICULTURAL IMPROVEMENT THROUGH EDUCATION AND EXPERIMENT.

Paper read by Mr. J. BROWN, B.Sc.Ag., N.D.A., Director of the Fields Division, at the Annual Conference of the New Zealand Council of Agriculture, July, 1916.

THE title of my subject as it appears in the agenda paper is somewhat general and indefinite in its import, but my main object, as you may gather, is to review the chief agencies working for the improvement of agriculture, and to offer you my views as to how these agencies may be made more efficient. These agencies are education and experiment, the latter including the work of experimental stations, co-operative trials, demonstration work, and all other special inquiries and investigations arising out of the agricultural needs of the Dominion.

That improvement in agricultural methods and practices must be brought about largely through the operation of these agencies is a fact which hardly needs to be substantiated, and I do not propose to take up your time in doing so, unless a challenge should arise in discussion subsequent to the reading of this paper.

Views, discussions, and proposals concerning agricultural education and the experimental functions of the Department of Agriculture have been brought into prominence in this country time after time for years past, at agricultural conferences, and by individuals interested. A more adequate provision for agricultural instruction has been freely advocated by, amongst others, the late Inspector-General of Schools, Mr. G. Hogben, and the present rural course in district high schools is the result mainly of his work. Recently Mr. Hogben contributed a paper on "Agricultural Education" to the Council of Education, presenting his views on a more adequate scheme for the fostering of the aims of agricultural education. Again, quite recently a report was presented to the House by the Hon. Mr. Hanan, Minister of Education, the trend of which was strongly in favour of a system of education which would minister more effectively to the needs of agriculture and to the mental efficiency of the rising generation of farmers. More recently still, certain members of the Philosophical Institute of Canterbury have published views on the subject of the development of agriculture by methods of scientific research.