

The education authorities appear to be agreed that the education of the future in New Zealand must be more and more related to the environment of the pupil and to the affairs of the people, and to concern itself to a far less extent with things that are remote and which do not enter intimately into the lives of the people. Hitherto, and now, the tendency has been, and is, especially in many high schools, to deal almost exclusively with what is foreign to the pupils' daily lives and experiences, or, as the report mentioned says, with pedantic studies and abstractions. Educators have come to realize that if education is to be effective it must deal with the realities which surround and enter into the pupil's existence, or, to put the matter into concrete form, in the rural schools of New Zealand there can be no education worthy of the name which does not use as a means to its ends the soils, the fields, the physical features, the plants, and the animals in the school environment, or which does not concern itself intimately and sympathetically with the social aspirations and business relationships of the people who live in the country.

There is one great practical difficulty in the way of using the real affairs of the people as the source and inspiration of educational effort, and that is that in most cases the teachers themselves have not been educated on these lines, and have difficulty in using the natural phenomena and the real experiences of the country as educating agencies. The school itself has for years been more or less of an exotic growth. It has not been native to the environment. The school and the affairs of the farm, for example, have been far apart. The education which a boy or a girl received at a country school had very little in common with the experiences of the boy or the girl outside of school hours. True, nature-study, elementary agriculture (so called), and domestic science have for some years figured in the curriculum, but I fear that to a great extent these have been book subjects and but little related to farm and home interests and experiences. Matters have certainly improved in recent years; but I cannot help thinking that, while the authorities and the teachers are sincere and earnest in their efforts to get away from the old formal routine methods of education, the thrall of the text-book is still strong upon the great majority. This disability will not vanish until steps are taken to properly train the rural teachers of the future to an intimacy with and appreciation of the facts, affairs, and ideals of country life.

This consideration is fundamental to my subject. No matter how excellent may be the work of experimental stations and other projects for furthering agriculture, their work can be of use