

AGRICULTURAL INSTRUCTION AND TRAINING.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF COUNCIL OF EDUCATION.

THE recommendations in regard to agricultural and industrial education, framed by the Council of Education at its general meeting held at Wellington in September, are recorded below for convenient reference. It will be observed that the recommendations provide for a complete sequence in agricultural and industrial training from the very elementary stages represented by nature-study and manual and domestic instruction provided for in the primary schools to the most advanced stages of agricultural and technical education required for the training of experts and instructors in these subjects. Another feature of the recommendations is the ample provision therein made for the training of school-teachers and other instructors on whose efficiency the success of the scheme naturally depends.

The recommendations are as follows :—

1. That nature-study and the school-garden should be included in the course of instruction of every primary school, the school-garden being used as the laboratory for simple experiments on and for observation of the common facts of plant-life.

2. That in every locality, whether at a district high school, technical high school, or high school, there should be provided an intermediate agriculture course of two or three years, both theoretical and practical. (This need not injure the general education of the pupils who take it.)

2A. That all district high schools with an average attendance not exceeding seventy should follow exclusively an agricultural or other industrial course.

3. That for those who have left the primary school at fourteen years of age to go to work there should be courses, if possible during the day, for part of the year but continuing for three or four years, of similar range and standard—that is, secondary or intermediate in character.

NOTE.—Such classes might be held, say, one day a week or two half-days twice a week for thirty weeks in the year, if possible; or if not then, say for two days a week for twenty weeks, or five or six days a week for three or four weeks—in each case the busiest part of the year being avoided.

3A. That for those who have spent at least two years in one of the courses 2 or 3 above, and who are prepared to give their whole time for two years longer to instruction in agriculture, there should be established in each Island a farm school.

4. That every male student of a training-college should go through a course in agriculture not lower in standard than the intermediate course just referred to.

Special teachers of agriculture would be required for these courses 2, 3, 4.

4A. That for male teachers agriculture of the D standard should be a compulsory subject in the C and D certificate examinations.

5. That the Agriculture Department and the Education Department should co-operate to make one of the State experimental farms (say, Ruakura) a place for the further training of those who have completed one of the intermediate courses 2, 3, or 4—whether such persons are intending to be teachers or farmers.

6. That to qualify themselves to be efficient teachers of rural schools, ex-students of training-colleges should be encouraged to take one year at such experimental farm. Special inducements should be held out to students to take this course by assuring to them an appointment to a rural school of Grade II or upwards, and a minimum salary of, say, £170 per annum.