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NEW ZEALAND.

EDUCATION: TECHNICAL EDUCATION.

(A BELGIAN REPORT ON TECHNICAL EDUCATION IN ENGLAND.)

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

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THE following pages contain an abstract of a report presented, 31st December, 1895, by Dr. Oscar Pyfferoen, to the Belgian Minister of Industry and Labour. [*Rapport sur L'Enseignement Professionnel en Angleterre*, par Oscar Pyfferoen, Chargé de Cours à l'Université de Gand, Docteur en Droit, Docteur en Sciences Politiques et Administratives, Bruxelles, 1896, 321pp.]

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INTRODUCTION.

SPECIAL thanks are due to many official persons in England who rendered every possible aid to the writer, by introducing him to the best schools of every district and supplying him with copious information.

PRELIMINARY NOTE.

Object of the Mission and of the Report.—No single work hitherto published can give an exact idea of the present state of “professional” education * (*l'enseignement professionnel*) in England, which during the past few years has advanced with gigantic strides. The English themselves make no effort to direct attention to the progress which is giving them an advantage in the commercial struggle with foreigners, and indeed they say that in this matter they are all behind. It would be a great mistake to believe them! Of course it is possible that they consider that not enough has been done. That there are Englishmen who do not regard with such disdain their own institutions of “professional” education is proved by a sentence in the report (1895) of the Secondary Education Commission: “Technical and manual instruction has been created and has assumed, especially in certain localities, what may in certain respects seem to be rather large proportions.” With such circumlocutions and with such timidity do the English confess to a fact of which they would willingly make their boast, were they not afraid of being too speedily imitated by other nations. The sequel will show that an almost unheard of development has taken place in a remarkably short time.

Definition of “Professional” Education, &c.—At present no precise definition exists. In England, even more than in Belgium, the limits which separate “professional” education from the other parts of public instruction have been left vague. The term “technical education” is used in England to denote both “professional” education and certain related branches. As a Belgian, the writer at first thought that “professional” education must mean that instruction which constitutes a special preparation for active employment in manual “professions,” trades, and business. But it is almost impossible to make a sharp distinction between “industrial” and “professional” education, and, consequently, they are in a somewhat confused way combined under one management, as is the case in Belgium, where some of the “professional” schools are really “industrial,” and others, though called “industrial,” have classes that are really “professional.” In general, and loosely, it may be said that “industrial” education is more theoretical, and “professional” education more practical. Technical education in the English sense may be divided into three stages, the elementary being such as is given in the “professional” schools of Belgium, the secondary such as belongs to its “industrial” schools, and the superior such as is provided by its schools of arts and manufactures, schools of mines, schools of civil engineering, and universities.

* In the translation the words “professional” and “industriel” have been sometimes rendered by their apparent equivalents—“professional” and “industrial”—with the inverted commas. It is necessary to advise the reader that “professional” and “industrial” as thus used relate respectively to “trades” and “manufactures.”