

1899.
NEW ZEALAND.

EDUCATION:

MANUAL TRAINING AND TECHNICAL INSTRUCTION.

[In continuation of E.-5, 1898.]

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

EXTRACT FROM TWENTY-SECOND ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MINISTER OF
EDUCATION.

MANUAL TRAINING AND TECHNICAL INSTRUCTION.

THE past year has been marked by a largely increased degree of interest in the question of manual and technical education, and, apart from the direct benefits derived from the aid rendered to classes for manual training and technical instruction, the Act of 1895 is bearing fruit by educating public opinion, and by preparing the way for larger and more comprehensive measures. What has been done in Great Britain, in America, and on the Continent of Europe has become more widely known through the medium of public journals and magazines, and the recent publication of Mr. A. D. Riley's report on "Manual and Technical Instruction" (E.-5B, 1898) has undoubtedly stimulated the minds of people throughout the colony, and tended to remove misconceptions as to the aims and methods of the new movement in education.

In many primary schools in different parts of the colony an increasing amount of attention is being paid to kindergarten occupations in the infant classes, and to manual exercises intended as a continuation of them in some of the standard classes. Several of the secondary schools provide a certain amount of manual instruction; but it is doubtful how far either this work or the work done in the primary schools has been co-ordinated with the other subjects of instruction, or has become an organic part of the education given in the schools. We are, perhaps, in danger of forgetting that manual training—the specific training of the hand and eye in conjunction with the brain—involves not so much the introduction of a new subject as a change of method in the treatment of nearly all the subjects included in the school course; that it not only develops powers that would often otherwise remain dormant, but provides, amidst the complexity of the demands of modern educational systems, the key to a true co-ordination so long sought for by Herbart and other earnest teachers. If our pupils are taught by direct observation of things, and if at the same time their constructive and creative activities are called into play, the different parts of their education are truly co-ordinated, because the various subjects of instruction are all, in a real sense, co-ordinated with nature. All other co-ordinations are more or less artificial. The principle of natural co-ordination is in reality an extension of the ideas of Froebel as exemplified in the best kindergartens. The same principle can be applied throughout all education—not only in the infant classes, but also in the higher stages of primary education, in secondary, and even in university education. Some of our best teachers already recognise this fact, and herein consists our best hope not merely for manual and technical education, but for a general advance in the intellectual training of the nation.