

1944
NEW ZEALAND

REPORT OF THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER, 1943

(In continuation of E.—1, 1943)

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

Office of the Department of Education,
Wellington, 8th July, 1944.

YOUR EXCELLENCY,—

I have the honour, in accordance with the provisions of the Education Act, 1914, to submit to Your Excellency the following report upon the progress and condition of public education in New Zealand during the year ended the 31st December, 1943.

His Excellency the Governor-General of the
Dominion of New Zealand.

I have, &c.,
H. G. R. MASON.

REPORT

Growing Interest in Education. In spite of the war, this has been a year of important educational advances. There has been a growing public interest in education, and an increasing demand for educational services from all sections of the community. The full reasons for this sudden growth of interest are doubtless complex, but that they are not entirely local is shown by a parallel movement in Great Britain, where the interest in projected educational reforms has been intense. There is evidence to show that much of this new interest in education both here and overseas springs from a growing understanding of the part education must play in the post-war world. This is extremely encouraging to all of us who have had throughout a deep faith in education as the basis of any national reconstruction. Even when the new interest shows itself in new criticisms it may be taken as a sign of grace, for education, to be healthy, needs both public interest and enlightened public criticism.

To provide a focus for this gathering public interest I am calling an Education Conference which will be representative of a wide range of organizations directly or indirectly connected with education. I have invited any one who is interested to submit schemes and reports as a basis for discussion, and I hope to have published before the Conference a full review of the education system as it now exists and a statement of the Government's plans for the future in those fields where policy has been fixed. I believe, however, that genuine advances in education, although they may be fostered by a Government, cannot simply radiate from some central authority. The great bulk of the people must not only understand what is afoot, but must also take an active part in working out the kind of education system they want for themselves and their children. I am particularly anxious that the Conference should discuss pre-school facilities, adult education, and leisure-time activities for adolescents, for these topics are, so to speak, on the growing edge of the education system as we now know it, and are for the most part not yet the subject of fixed Government policy. I am hopeful that the deliberations of the Conference will be of outstanding value to the Government in shaping its future policy in education.

Changes in Secondary Instruction. Within the school system the most notable advances during the year have been in the secondary field. The University has adopted, for schools on an approved list, a method of accrediting pupils for entrance to the University. No one can understand what this will mean to the schools who does not know something of the history of the old Matriculation or University Entrance Examination. It was devised, as its name implies, for the specific purpose of testing a pupil's fitness to go on to University studies. When a very small percentage of the total