

1902.
NEW ZEALAND.

EDUCATION : MANUAL AND TECHNICAL INSTRUCTION.

[In continuation of E.-5, 1901.]

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

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

DURING the year steady progress has been made in the formation of adult classes for technical instruction, and there has been a large increase—more than fivefold—in the classes for manual instruction in public schools, principally in the direction of introducing into the work of the preparatory classes and into the lower standard classes exercises based upon kindergarten methods. This feature is sound as far as it goes, as it seems to show that the spirit of the new movement is being rightly understood, for the change indicated by the introduction of hand-work into the school is not one affecting the mere details or machinery of school work, but is more fundamental in its character. Changes that affect only the externals of the school system, or only increase the number of disconnected subjects in the school syllabus, are sure to turn out in the end to be mere temporary devices. It has been the fashion to speak of that portion of a man's education that he receives at school as a preparation for life; in truth, a man's education goes on throughout his whole life, and the time spent at school is not merely a preparation for life, it is part of life itself. If the manual dexterity and the regular and easy co-ordination of hand and eye and brain that lead to the development of skill in the workman or the engineer, the artist or the surgeon, be not developed in youth, then there is a gap between the school-life and the after-life that is unnatural and prejudicial to the success of the adult; for there are few occupations in which some degree of manual skill is not at one time or another useful, and none in which men or women can afford to be without that all-round training of the mind that can be obtained only by combining the exercise of the muscular activities with that of the observation, reason, and memory. The instincts of the child herein guide him aright; he is constantly examining objects and seeking for some fresh outlet for his muscular activities. (As every instinct corresponds to some reality, no instinct should be overlooked; but every instinct should either be trained or be guided aright in the years of childhood.) These instincts are not such as mark the brute, but belong to the higher human intelligence, and they must therefore be taken seriously as indications of undeveloped powers, which need to be directed and disciplined, not suppressed, until they appear as scientific habit and manual skill in the youth and the adult. The new