

if we had such a Council, instead of being at a standstill, as far as education in New Zealand is concerned, we should be making progress, and every child would be taught with special reference to the work and surroundings of its after-life. Take, for instance, a mining district: you would there have special subjects appertaining to the future life of the child; and you would have the same thing in agricultural districts. In certain districts you might make such subjects as bee-keeping or fruit-growing of special importance. You might thus in many cases give instruction, in an elementary form, in the primary schools on such subjects as might be of use in the future work of the child. Well, now, as far as the country is concerned, what are we doing in the way of technical education at the present time? I am afraid very little. If you take up almost any paper in New Zealand you will find, I am glad to say, a considerable amount of prominence given to technical education in the towns. I took up a paper the other morning—a Wanganui paper—just as I was writing these notes, and I came across such a paragraph as this: "The classes in electricity will be continued on Tuesdays and Thursdays. A thoroughly practical course will be taken on Tuesday evening," and so on. They try to encourage the people to go to continuation classes; but that is all for the towns. Now, as I ask, what are we doing for technical education in the country? We are making small efforts in a very spasmodic sort of way, but they are altogether too small in relation to the very great advantages that the country people would have if they had proper technical education. When you begin to think of these things I think the best step that one can take is to go to other countries and examine what they are doing, and see how we can copy their best. As far as England is concerned, I am sorry to say she is lagging behind very much, as we are, in this respect. Fortunately, some of the counties of England with more advantages than others have taken up the subject of rural education, and are doing something. But it is by no means common in England that anything is done at all. Some public-spirited people, like Lady Warwick, have taken up certain branches of the subject, and are encouraging girls in England to make special studies of various things which may be of great advantage to them in the future. In Ireland they are further ahead than in England, and this is almost entirely due to one man—Sir Horace Plunket—and he has a Council of Agriculture to assist him. The members of the Council are brought from all parts of Ireland. Different parts have different persons to represent them, and these people meet at certain periods and discuss questions in connection with the agricultural or rural education of the people. That alone must be of great advantage. I think, however, that we must go to newer countries to see what we can do in the matter of education, because England is a very conservative country, and it takes a long time to work the people up. In newer countries they see the advantages of newer methods much quicker. In America they have made enormous strides in rural education. Every State in America has a University of its own in connection with agriculture. One of these—at Wisconsin—is celebrated all over the world. Dr. Babcock, one of the teachers there, was the inventor of the Babcock milk-tester, but he had such a public spirit that, believing that a public servant should serve the public, he did not even patent the invention himself, but threw it open to the world. This shows that the people taking an interest in education there are doing so very largely from an unselfish point of view. Then, in America they have what they call Workers' Institutes, and if any of you gentlemen who may be interested in the question will inquire of Mr. Wilson, the Librarian here, he will show you copies of the works which the Institutes send out. An account in last year's publication is given of a conference of the workers. At this conference each member gave the experiences that he had in connection with his work, and some very interesting experiences were related. One of them said that the only way in which you could get farmers to come together was to give them something free. He offered them free seeds, and got a very good audience, distributing a few packets of cheap seeds. These people leave the University and go down among the farmers themselves. The more illiterate farmer has, as a rule, a great contempt for college education, but this has entirely been dissipated in America owing to the fact that the students and the teachers have gone among the farmers themselves, have discussed the ordinary work of the farm with them, have talked with them about their own difficulties, have shown them reasons for certain things taking place on their own farms, and when it came to any particular difficulty they have told them how, for instance, a neighbouring farmer has been able to overcome it. By this means they have broken down the barrier between the farmer and the educationalist. In America, though the politician has built up a great protection-wall as far as foreign goods are concerned, they are most liberal—they are absolutely prodigal—in the way of sending abroad educational literature. There is a great deal of it in the library here, and I shall be able to show you one or two things which I have got from America. Canada has received great advantage indeed from American educationalists, and Canadians have acknowledged this quite freely. One of the latest writers there acknowledged—I was reading this the other day—that they had taken a great deal of what America was able to supply them with in the way of educational ideas. We have had great difficulty in collecting information upon this subject, but Mr. Hall, one of our members, and one of the secretaries, went to Canada lately and made a special study of this question. He interviewed Professor Robertson there, who is Commissioner of Agriculture for the Dominion of Canada. When he returned Mr. Hall published a letter in an Auckland paper. This is printed at the end of this pamphlet which I have here, and which I thought I would perhaps leave with you. [Pamphlet produced.] I suggested that Mr. Hall should come down and give evidence before you, and I asked Mr. Baume if the Committee would pay his expenses if he did so, but Mr. Baume said they had not done so previously and he could not say that they would do it. So Mr. Hall did not see his way to come from Auckland to give evidence at his own expense. As far as Canada is concerned, I shall make a few quotations from his paper. Mr. Hall quotes Professor Robertson as follows: "No great advance in agriculture is possible except by education, and any system of education to help people who work on the farms must be a system that will help the common rural schools, because those are the schools where the future men and women on the farms will get their education." Professor Robertson goes in very largely