

1916.
NEW ZEALAND.

STATE EXPERIMENTAL FARMS

(REPORT OF THE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE ON THE).

Return to an Order of the House of Representatives dated the 1st June, 1916.

Ordered, "That there be laid before this House the report of the Board of Agriculture on the State experimental farms,"—(Mr. SCOTT.)

THE GOVERNMENT EXPERIMENTAL FARMS.

SIR,—

Board of Agriculture, Wellington, 21st January, 1916.

As I stated at the time you were good enough to attend one of our meetings, Mr. Massey has asked us to give him our opinion as a Board as to what should be done with the various experimental farms. In pursuance of that wish the members of the Board have severally visited the farms, and the following is the report which they wish to present to you as the present Minister in connection therewith. I might add that we are very fortunate in having on the Board men of such varied interests and experience. They represent agriculturists, pastoralists, dairymen, fruitgrowers, stud breeders of various breeds of animals, as well as the small-farming class, and one of the members is a man of large experience and high standing in commercial matters, as well as being a farmer himself. Several of the members have written special reports upon the various subjects upon which they have experience.

State farms are established for three purposes—(1) Demonstration; (2) experimental and scientific work in connection with agriculture; (3) education. (All the work done on State farms, however, is of an educational nature.)

DEMONSTRATION.

The objects that a demonstration farm may have are various. Once having shown to the farming public what was intended to be demonstrated, and when the farming community has benefited by the demonstration, the uses of this section of the farm are gone. A demonstration to be of most use must be easily seen by farmers, hence in Ireland they have instituted what are known as "cross-road demonstrations," so that every one who passes by may see them and know what is going on. The demonstrations carried out at the various farms that we have in the North Island have been undoubtedly useful, but unfortunately the number of farmers visiting them is few, owing to the fact that they are somewhat difficult to visit and return home from in a day; and you know from your experience of farmers that unless they can see for themselves the results following any system they remain sceptical and averse to making any alteration in their own method. It does not always follow, however, that a demonstration given at any one point is actually seen by many farmers, but some of the more enterprising and eager farmers do see it, and reduce the methods of practice on their own farms, and thus spread the knowledge among the neighbours by what they see. At the same time the original Government demonstration should receive the credit for any change of system.

One point which may be noted here is that the work of the farms would be very much popularized by having excursion trains run to them at certain times of the year. Hitherto any body of men wishing to go there have been responsible to the Railway Department, and the guarantors having been called upon in one or two cases, the excursions to the farms have to a large extent been discontinued. It would be of great service from an educational point of view if the Agricultural Department could arrange for special trains for the purpose of visiting the various farms. Without doubt the opportunity would be largely availed of.

EXPERIMENTAL AND SCIENTIFIC WORK.

The object of the whole work of demonstration and experiment is to educate the farming community. In carrying out experiments the object in view must always be the advancement