

1917.
NEW ZEALAND.

BOARD OF AGRICULTURE

(REPORT OF WORK FOR THE TERM OF ITS OFFICE, 1914-17).

Laid on the Table of the House of Representatives by Leave.

REPORT.

Board of Agriculture, Wellington, 14th May, 1917.

The Hon. Minister of Agriculture, Wellington.

SIR,—

The term of office of the first Board of Agriculture expired on the 28th ultimo, and although the order of reference makes no mention of their submitting a report, either yearly or at the end of their term of office, on the work they have performed, yet they deem it desirable that one should be furnished to you. Such a report must necessarily, at this juncture, cover the whole of the Board's work since their first meeting in June, 1914, but they think that in future years it would be preferable to submit a yearly report to you. The Board thank you for the intimation conveyed in your letter of the 2nd March last to have their annual report incorporated with your own and that of the Department. They also hope that you will see your way to have it circulated amongst the various agricultural and pastoral associations and societies. These, as you are aware, recommend to His Excellency the Governor for appointment to the Board eight of the twelve members provided for in the Board of Agriculture Act of 1913, and one association in particular has expressed a desire to see an annual report of the Board's work. The Board have already presented one report on some of their work to the Council of Agriculture, which was printed with the Council's report of its annual conference held in July, 1916, and the report now submitted to you includes a large number of the matters covered by that report.

NOXIOUS WEEDS.

The question of noxious weeds has been dealt with at great length and in various ways, and the Board have gone to great trouble in getting the views of those interested. We have, however, compiled returns, and will be in a position shortly to make a report upon it. During the past year we devoted considerable time to the subject. An effort was made to obtain information as to the worst weeds in the different centres of the Dominion, and the best methods that had been devised to cope with them. There was a very fair response to a circular that was sent out, and we hope that the information collected, which is somewhat in the nature of a "weed census," will be found useful in dealing with this very difficult problem.

Reports from Mr. Edwin Hall, one of our members; from Mr. E. Clifton, late Director of Fields and Experimental Farms; and from Mr. Cockayne, Biologist of the Department of Agriculture, dealing with the subject, were drawn up (copies of which are appended), and a special round-the-table conference of the Board and the officers of the Department interested in the question was held, at the close of which it was decided to set up a committee to formulate the various amendments to the Noxious Weeds Act that had been suggested, with the view of getting an amended Bill introduced into Parliament.

We have also circularized the various Education Boards in the Dominion asking them to take steps to encourage scholars to make collections of noxious weeds, and to promote a closer knowledge of weeds amongst the pupils by placing on the schoolroom walls coloured illustrations of the worst weeds in the district.

It was also suggested that the Department should issue a leaflet dealing with the best agricultural and economic methods of checking and reducing the growth of such weeds as Californian thistle, blackberry, ragwort, gorse, &c.