

met him in conference, when Mr. Massey explained to the meeting the position regarding the agreement which had been proposed between the British Government and the Governments of Australia and New Zealand for the administration of Nauru Island and for the distribution of phosphates therefrom. At a subsequent meeting of the Board the opportunity was taken to discuss with Mr. Ellis, manager of the Pacific Phosphate Company, the working of the phosphate-deposits at Nauru. With Mr. Ellis we went fully into this question, as well as the deposits on other phosphate islands in the Pacific, also the output, methods of working, shipping operations, &c. As the result of our inquiries and consideration of the subject we sent a letter to the Right Hon. the Prime Minister embodying the conclusions reached by us. This letter, together with the accompanying reports on phosphate islands and the need of a supply of phosphate for the Dominion's requirements, by Mr. Aston, Chemist to the Department of Agriculture, have been presented to Parliament and issued as a parliamentary paper—H.—29B.

PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH SCHOOL PUPILS' AGRICULTURAL COMPETITIONS.

Dr. Reakes brought before us a proposal of the Otago Expansion League to establish school pupils' agricultural competitions, with a request that the Government subsidize the project and generally assist in the movement. The matter was fully discussed, and the opinion was expressed that the conduct of the competitions could be more effectively and economically managed by the agricultural and pastoral associations' activities than by the Expansion League, and the following resolution was therefore passed and forwarded on to you:—

"That the Board of Agriculture think boy competitions, as is suggested by the Otago Expansion League, should be encouraged, but think that the agricultural and pastoral associations, which already have been doing this work, should be the medium by which they are carried out. If arrangements for this can be made with any agricultural and pastoral association the Board think the Government might well authorize a small sum of money for the purpose of giving prizes for such competitions, and to this end suggest that the Otago Expansion League confer with the Otago Agricultural and Pastoral Association in the matter."

CANADIAN SYSTEM OF DEMONSTRATION FARMS FOR NEW ZEALAND.

A letter was received from the Wellington Provincial President of the Farmers' Union, suggesting the adoption of the Canadian system of demonstration farms as a means of increasing production in the Dominion, and as a first step in this direction to obtain particulars of the scheme from the Canadian Department of Agriculture.

The proposal was discussed with Dr. Reakes, who expressed himself as being quite willing to fall in with it.

A reply was sent informing the Farmers' Union that we had discussed the proposal with Dr. Reakes, who willingly agreed to get the fullest information available on the subject of demonstration farms from Canada, and who would be very pleased, on receipt of the particulars, to pass them on to the union; and, moreover, will favourably consider the practicability of giving effect to the suggestions as soon as circumstances permitted.

PURE SEEDS BILL.

The importance of bringing forward legislation dealing with the sale of seeds was again discussed with Dr. Reakes, who informed the Board that the necessary measure could not be brought before Parliament this session. He mentioned that he was waiting until Mr. Cockayne, the Department's Biologist, returned from his trip to America, so that the ideas gathered by him abroad could be made use of in connection with the matter. The following resolution was passed and sent on to you:—

"That the Board of Agriculture, realizing the importance of a Seeds Bill, regret to find that it is quite impossible to get such a Bill through Parliament this year. The Board suggests that the Department have the present draft Bill printed so as to be ready for introduction in the early stages of next session."

AMENDMENT OF FERTILIZERS ACT AND PURE SEEDS BILL.

The secretary of the North Canterbury Farmers' Union wrote to us drawing attention to the fact that the Board's recommendations to Government in 1917 *re* an amendment to the Fertilizers Act and a Pure Seeds Bill had not yet been carried out, and urged that the Minister of Agriculture be pressed to give effect to these recommendations.

One of our members, Mr. Hunt, and Mr. Aston, the Departmental Chemist, who had gone into the matter of the suggested amendment to the Fertilizers Act, reported that they had agreed on the suggested amendments necessary. After the matter had been fully discussed we agreed that as it was one of importance the following resolution should be forwarded to you:—

"That the Board desires to impress upon the Hon. Minister of Agriculture that a very brief but very important amendment should be made in the Fertilizers Act, to provide that in the analysis of manures the citrate soluble phosphate-content be shown in addition to what is at present provided for, and that the method of arriving at the citric-acid test should be clearly laid down."

REQUESTS TO GOVERNMENT FOR EXPERIMENTAL FARMS IN OTAGO AND SOUTHLAND.

Dr. Reakes brought before us the question of the establishment of experimental farms in Otago and Southland, and with him we discussed the proposal to establish experimental farms