

1926.

NEW ZEALAND.

ORGANIZATION OF SCIENTIFIC AND INDUSTRIAL
RESEARCH IN NEW ZEALAND

(STATEMENT BY THE RIGHT HON. THE PRIME MINISTER IN CONNECTION WITH), TOGETHER
WITH REPORT BY SIR H. FRANK HEATH, K.C.B., SECRETARY TO THE DEPARTMENT OF
SCIENTIFIC AND INDUSTRIAL RESEARCH, LONDON, ENGLAND.

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

STATEMENT.

Prime Minister's Office, Wellington, 25th May, 1926.

It is generally recognized that feeling has increasingly grown during the last few years amongst progressive farmers and industrialists and others that the time has arrived for a better linking-up of science with our national industries, primary and secondary. It has also been recognized by Government that need exists for a central authority to exercise control and to overlook the research work carried on by Government Departments; to suggest means for co-operation and co-ordination of the research work carried out by University colleges, other institutes, and private workers; to prevent overlapping, and to advise Government in the subsidizing or endowment of research by grants, &c. The only agency undertaking any part of this work, other than research grants, at present is the Board of Science and Art; but that body, appointed primarily to control the Dominion Museum and Art Gallery, is obviously not the most suitable body to function as a new Department.

The difficulty which presented itself to Government, however, was to arrive at some practical method of reaching the objective. With this aim in view, a Committee of Scientific and Industrial Research, consisting of certain heads of Government Departments and representatives of the industrial associations (presided over by Dr. Marsden, Assistant Director of Education), was formed early last year.

While certain conclusions were arrived at, no definite programme was formulated by the Committee, the matter being held in abeyance pending visits to the Dominion by Sir Ernest Rutherford and Sir Frank Heath.

Sir Frank Heath is head of the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research in England, a Department specially created during the early stages of the war primarily to meet the national difficulties arising from the shortage of essential supplies previously secured from foreign sources. On the cessation of hostilities it was realized that great good would result in the work of reconstruction if the functions of the Department were enlarged, the success which had been obtained revealing more and more the necessity for the continued and systematic encouragement and organization of scientific research in every phase of national life.

Sir Frank Heath had been invited by the Commonwealth Government to inquire into the possibility of closer co-operation between his Department and similar organizations in Australia, and into the prosecution of scientific research as it affected industry. Government felt that opportunity should be taken of the visit of Sir Frank to Australia to ask the Home authorities to be good enough to allow him to extend his visit to New Zealand, if only for a short time, so that we might have the advantage of his wide organizing experience and knowledge.

Considering the short time spent in New Zealand by Sir Frank, the report is of great value, enunciating as it does broad principles for the foundation of a far-sighted policy in the matter of research.

The report has been carefully considered by Government, and immediate steps will be taken to give general effect to the recommendations which have been made, though in certain matters it will be necessary to obtain legislative sanction.