

Station has been established at Palmerston North in co-operation with the Research Department, with a field area on part of the Massey Agricultural College farm, and valuable research is being carried out there into plant-diseases, insect pests, and other matters of vital interest to the farming community.

The Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, in addition to its other activities for the benefit of our secondary industries, is, in collaboration with the Agriculture Department, investigating problems of wool research, losses due to temporary sterility of cows, and cold-storage problems connected with all perishable exports. Arrangements have also been made for the determination of the amounts of the various vitamins present in New Zealand butter, and for investigation of methods whereby the high vitamin content of butterfat from New Zealand cows may be preserved in the manufacture of butter and cheese. It is satisfactory to note that the production of these commodities shows satisfactory increases, which demonstrate that the increasing use of fertilizers for top-dressing and other farming operations is profitable to the farmer and the Dominion generally. To the improved carrying-capacity of top-dressed grasslands may also be partly traced the remarkable increase of 1,870,000 in the number of sheep, which was disclosed by the interim returns as at the 30th April, 1929.

**Department of
Scientific and
Industrial Research.**

EDUCATION.

If the prosperity of the Dominion depends upon the agricultural and pastoral industries—and I do not think that any one will dispute the fact—it is obvious that our system of education should be designed to provide our children with a good general education with a bias towards farming: that is to say, in the later stages of the school life the teaching of subjects appertaining to the problems and life of the man on the land should be a prominent feature of the school curriculum. At present it would appear that our education system is out of touch with our economic conditions in giving, if anything, a bias towards the professions. It is the policy of the Government to correct this, and, as already announced, it is intended to set up a Select Committee to take evidence from the farming, technical, industrial, and professional groups in order to ascertain the best method of attaining the desired end.

Education.

In many cases where the conditions have been favourable for school consolidation, and local opinion is not antagonistic to the change, small schools are being closed and conveyance of the pupils to larger schools instituted, the children thus obtaining the advantage of instruction in better-equipped schools and from more highly qualified teachers than would otherwise have been the case; and, further, it has been possible to provide for secondary instruction in some of the consolidated schools for many country children who under ordinary conditions would have had no opportunity of obtaining more than primary-school instruction. It is gratifying to find that country settlers are learning to appreciate the advantages of the consolidated schools, and the Government hopes to extend in this way to more and more country pupils some of the privileges in the past enjoyed only by the more fortunate inhabitants of the larger centres.

**Consolidation of
country schools.**

A further method of providing better education facilities for children situated in remote localities is by means of the Correspondence School, the activities of which are being extended to provide courses of secondary-school instruction. Already one hundred pupils have been enrolled in the secondary department. The primary classes of the school have also been extended to deal with over seven hundred pupils. All of these factors are of great value in raising the standard of education in country districts, and when the curriculum has been amended on the lines I have indicated these additional facilities will assist the prospective settlers to obtain the maximum production from the lands which they will take up in due course.

**Correspondence
School.**

The growing recognition of the value of providing special forms of instruction for backward children has brought fresh responsibilities, and has led during the past year to the establishment of further classes and the appointment of additional staff to deal with them.

Backward children.