

New Zealand

New Zealand is an island nation, situated between the Equator and the South Pole in the southern Pacific Ocean. It is situated the same distance east from Australia as London is from Moscow. The distance between the two countries is about 1,600 kilometres. The countries are separated by the Tasman Sea. Its nearest neighbours to the North are New Caledonia, Fiji and Tonga.

New Zealand includes two main and a number of smaller islands. Each of the two main islands (North and South Islands) is hilly and mountainous. The main mountain ranges are on the South Island and include the Southern Alps, in which 20 peaks exceed 3,000 metres. The highest peak is Mount Cook on South Island.

A volcanic plateau is in the centre of North Island. There are three active volcanoes in North Island, and the Rotorua district is known for its geysers and hot springs. Volcanic action also played a part in the formation of the islands, especially on the North Island, where the process still continues. Earthquakes are frequent there. As a result of the movement of these tectonic plates many mountains have been lifted above the lowlands or reduced. In 1991 an avalanche reduced the highest peak, Mount Cook, from 3,764 metres to 3,754 metres.

New Zealand has an oceanic climate, without extremes of heat or cold. Snow is common only in the mountains. The eastern lowlands include the driest and sunniest climates.

The population of the country is small, 3.6 million people. Three fourths of New Zealanders live on North Island. The largest centre of population is Auckland. The capital of the country is Wellington.

New Zealand is an independent state and a member of the Commonwealth. The British monarch is head of state, represented by Governor General. As in Great Britain, the legislature is called the Parliament. In New Zealand the Parliament consists of a single chamber, the House of Representatives. Its members are elected every three years. There are 120 members in the House of Representatives. The leader of the party in power becomes the Prime Minister, who heads the formal Executive Council. There are 38 government departments in the country. Most ministers have charge of more than one department.

The Parliament seats in Wellington in the building which is called the Beehive because of its form. The Prime Minister's residence in Wellington is known as Vogel House.

New Zealand's dairy industry is considered to be the most efficient. The export of dairy products is the largest in the world despite the country's small size and population. Other industries are textiles, machinery, fish, forest products. Agriculture is highly industrialized. New Zealand is often called the sheep farm of Great Britain.

The largest cities of the country are Wellington, Auckland, Christchurch.

English and Maori are the official languages, also English is the main language.

Vocabulary

Equator — экватор

Pole — полюс

neighbour — сосед

distance — расстояние

mountain range — горная цепь

mountainous — гористый

to exceed — превышать

volcanic plateau — вулканическое плато

geyser — гейзер

spring — источник, родник

earthquake — землетрясение

avalanche — лавина

extreme — крайность

legislature — законодательная власть

single — единственный

Executive Council — исполнительный совет

department — департамент, ведомство

to have charge — отвечать (за что-л.)

beehive — пчелиный улей

dairy products — молочные продукты