

1943

NEW ZEALAND

DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRIES AND COMMERCE

(TWENTY-SIXTH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE)

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

Wellington, 29th June, 1943.

YOUR EXCELLENCY,—

I have the honour to submit for your Excellency's information the report of the Department of Industries and Commerce for the past year.

I have, &c.,

D. G. SULLIVAN,

Minister of Industries and Commerce.

His Excellency the Governor-General of the Dominion of New Zealand.

Wellington, 24th June, 1943.

SIR,—

I have the honour to submit the annual report of the Department of Industries and Commerce. This report deals with the work of the Department since the previous report was placed before Parliament, and covers the period ended 31st March, 1943.

I have, &c.,

L. J. SCHMITT,

Secretary.

The Hon. D. G. Sullivan, Minister of Industries and Commerce.

PRICE CONTROL

The control of all prices for goods and services which was initiated at the commencement of hostilities has been continued and intensified, and the volume of work executed by the Price Tribunal has greatly increased during the year under review.

Under the Control of Prices Emergency Regulations, which empowered the Tribunal, with the consent of the Hon. the Minister, to make Price Orders, a further 60 of such Orders have been made during the year, giving a total of 127 Orders since the regulations came into effect. These Orders cover a wide range of commodities. Since the inception of the regulations, Court proceedings have been taken 370 instances, resulting in 361 convictions and 9 dismissals.

On the 15th December, 1942, Amendment No. 3 to the Control of Prices Emergency Regulations 1939 came into force. This amendment contained four matters of the utmost importance to the Tribunal in its efforts towards better control:—

- (1) It defined the offence known as "black marketing" and simplified the procedure for bringing profiteers to account. Drastic penalties for both black marketing and profiteering were provided, the minimum fine on a conviction in the case of an individual being £50, with a maximum of £1,000; in the case of a company £250, with a maximum of £5,000. In addition, an individual becomes liable on conviction to six months' imprisonment:
- (2) It brought within the scope of the regulations trading transactions of all local authorities:
- (3) It gave to the Tribunal the power to prohibit the sale of declared classes of goods until approved prices had been obtained therefor:
- (4) Hire-purchase agreements, which previously were beyond the control of the Tribunal, were brought within its jurisdiction.

The other clauses of the amendment were mainly of a machinery nature, designed to simplify the procedure of price control.

In addition to the thirty-eight lines which were stabilized at prices ruling on 1st September, 1941, in accordance with the principle recommended by the Stabilization Committee, a comprehensive schedule of goods and services has been brought under the Stabilization Scheme announced by the Prime Minister on 15th December, 1942. This stabilization plan was designed to promote economic stability of New Zealand by preventing or at least minimizing inflation and by holding down the cost of living within narrow limits. The regulations under which the stabilization scheme is administered were gazetted on the 15th December, 1942, and are known as the Economic Stabilization Emergency Regulations 1942.