

NEW ZEALAND MANUFACTURERS' FEDERATION AND DISTRICT ASSOCIATIONS

With the changed conditions of war as a background, the relationship between the Department and the New Zealand Manufacturers' Federation and its constituent associations has been one of close co-operation. When it has been necessary to impose restrictions on the use of vital raw materials, the federation and the industry group concerned have been consulted. There has been a free exchange of information on all subjects of mutual interest and close collaboration on the question of publicity for the encouragement of developing New Zealand manufactures. The thanks of the Department are extended to the executive and administrative officers of the federation and the four constituent associations for their continued assistance in the solution of common problems.

TOBACCO INDUSTRY

In spite of many difficulties which have arisen as a result of war conditions, the tobacco-growing industry remains in a sound and healthy position.

For four successive seasons—that is, for the harvests of 1939, 1940, 1941, and 1942—growers have received an average price of 1s. 10½d. per pound for flue-cured and 1s. 7½d. per pound for air-dried leaf, and it has been decided that no change will be made in respect of leaf of the 1943 crop. These prices have been fixed by the issue of Price Orders by the Price Tribunal. Stabilization has therefore been effectively accomplished, and the assurance of a definite average price for their leaf has done much to encourage growers to maintain production at the highest level possible.

The minimum price below which raw leaf cannot be sold has been the same as for the five previous seasons—namely, 1s. 2d. per pound. Regulations fixing this price are passed annually under the Board of Trade Act, 1919, and are entitled the Board of Trade (Raw Tobacco Price) Regulations.

As stated in the last report, it was desired that the production in 1942 should be even greater than that which resulted from a record harvest in 1941. To this end every effort was made, but it was envisaged from the commencement of the season that the greatest deterrent would be an inadequate supply of labour occasioned by war requirements and the entry into the armed forces of a considerable number of experienced growers and key workers. Unseasonable frosts, one of which occurred in the early part of the planting season, and two in the middle of harvesting operations, were additional factors in effecting a reduction in the yield, which was, nevertheless, the second highest that has been realized.

A keen interest has been taken in the research programme operated by the Tobacco Research Committee, and grants from the Tobacco Board have been continued towards the cost of the upkeep of the Research Station at Umukuri.

Statistics of Tobacco-growing.—The following table provides comparative figures for the past five seasons:—

Season.					Number of Growers.	Acreage.	Production.
							lbs.
1937-38	..	..	..	..	442	2,563	2,067,827
1938-39	..	..	..	..	342	2,225	1,423,610
1939-40	..	..	..	..	339	2,570	*2,217,040
1940-41	..	..	..	..	381	2,963	3,143,355
1941-42	..	..	..	..	381	3,063	2,721,539

* Amended figure.

WHEAT AND FLOUR

The year under review has been a record one for turnover, both in tonnages and value, the quantities involved being 267,244 long tons of wheat, 175,000 short tons of flour, and 58,000 short tons of bran and pollard. Total turnover was valued at just under £6,000,000.

During the year the price of wheat to growers was raised to 6s. 2d. per bushel March Tuscan basis f.o.b.s.i. grower's nearest port. Regulations have been gazetted for the purpose of administering the insurance fund which is being provided by the retention of ½d. per bushel from the price mentioned above.

The 1942 harvest yielded approximately 8,671,244 bushels of wheat from 258,002 acres, or an average of 33.61 bushels per acre. This year's harvest is expected to yield 9,500,000 bushels from 283,000 acres. Importations were made from Australia during the year to the extent of 2,776,300 bushels of wheat (1,764,000 for milling and 1,012,300 for fowl feed) and 5,977 short tons of stock meal for poultry food.

The flourmilling industry has continued to operate economically and very satisfactorily, the closest co-operation existing between the Controller and the industry. The output of the mills constituted an all-time record.

LINEN FLAX

The past year has seen the completion of the rapid and extensive development of the industry, and attention is now being directed towards establishment. The six new factories, with the exception of Seddon, are now operating at nearly full capacity, and with the eleven older factories in steady production a continuous supply of finished products is being despatched overseas and to New Zealand manufacturers.