

Clarendon Phosphate.—During the year the quarrying of the high-grade phosphate rock by the British Phosphate Commissioners closed because further suitable supplies were not procurable.

The large-scale operations concerned with quarrying and grinding the low-grade phosphate also closed down. One company is continuing small-scale operations in the area.

Organic Fertilizer.—The Organic Fertilizer Control Order, which directed the use of organic fertilizer as a first priority for market-garden crops, was not renewed after 31st December, 1945, as, with the end of the war, the large-scale vegetable-growing operations previously needed were no longer necessary.

Official Samples.—During the year official samples of fertilizers have been taken and analysed, also a number of samples of limestone and ground limestone. Materials thought to have some manurial value have also been analysed and reported on. Consideration is being given to overhauling the Fertilizer Act to bring it into line with modern fertilizer trends.

Transport of Lime and Fertilizers.—The delivery of both lime and fertilizer ex-works to farmers is being retarded on account of the inability of the Railways Department to handle the total quantity being manufactured. To assist the position as far as fertilizers were concerned, arrangements were made to subsidize road transport up to one hundred miles from works in the Auckland district.

NASSELLA TUSOCK

Investigations into the control of nassella tussock in North Canterbury and Marlborough have been continued during the year, and a special inter-departmental committee was set up to go into the question of methods and action that should be taken to bring about the control of this weed. As a result of the report of this committee, legislation is being drafted with a view to giving the necessary powers to local bodies to take action to prevent the spread of the tussock and ultimately to bring it under control. In the meantime financial assistance is being granted the Nassella Tussock Committee in North Canterbury and the Marlborough County Council to enable those bodies to have work carried out to prevent the further spread of this weed.

PHORMIUM TENAX

All figures are taken for the period 1st February, 1945, to 31st January, 1946. During the first part of the year, processing of green leaf into fibre for the manufacture of rope for the Armed Forces and tow for the manufacture of woolpacks, &c., was being maintained at full pressure, and mills were turning out sufficient fibre to meet the requirements of the rope-works. In October last the demand for fibre for war purposes ceased and from then on a considerable drop in fibre-production was noticed.

Production figures are shown below.

Production of Green Leaf.—Total quantity of green leaf cut, 27,450 tons.

Consumption of Fibre, &c.—The total amount of fibre, tow, stripper strips, and unscutched fibre (straw) produced was 4,835 tons, made up as follows:—

	Tons.
Fibre	2,886
Tow	460
Stripper strips	71
Unscutched fibre (straw)	1,418
	4,835

Mills operating.—The number of stripping-mills operating to date is 19, comprising 26 strippers. During the year all mills have been visited and the various aspects of the industry explained to millers and problems discussed. They have all expressed their thanks to the Department for the assistance rendered the industry.