

RURAL DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

REPORT OF P. W. SMALLFIELD, DIRECTOR

The Division was formed on 1st December, 1944, and the past year has been occupied with the organization and training of staff, the collection and tabulation of basic information required for cost-of-production studies, and the preparation of reports on the Dominion's primary industries. Field work has been restricted to the Auckland and Canterbury districts, but will be extended to the Wellington, Otago, and Southland districts during the coming year if the necessary staff can be secured.

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION

The Division has been assigned the duty of compiling the information required by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization on the Dominion's primary industries, of distributing the Organization's literature, and of publicizing its work to improve world food-production and nutrition. The organization may well provide the means for the rational planning of world food-production and thus confer benefit on both food exporting and importing countries, for the aims of FAO are " raising levels of nutrition and standards of living of the peoples securing improvements in the efficiency of production and distribution of all food and agricultural products, bettering the conditions of rural populations, and thus contributing to an expanding world economy "

It is expected that the work connected with the Food and Agriculture Organization will become a very important section of the Division's activities.

AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

This Committee was originally constituted as one of the main planning Committees of the Organization for National Development, with the Division supplying the Secretariat. Since the decision to dissolve that Organization, the Committee has continued with its work under the jurisdiction of the Minister of Agriculture.

During the year the Committee concentrated mainly on investigating the possible development of the various branches of specialized intensive farming, with particular reference to the scope for settlement of ex-servicemen for the guidance of the Rehabilitation Department. Reports on the citrus-fruit and beekeeping industries were completed by sub-committees which included representation of the respective producers' organizations. Sub-committees on the pip- and stone-fruit and poultry industries have also met and their reports are nearing completion. A survey of commercial vegetable-production is being conducted through the field officers of the Horticulture Division to provide the necessary basic data for a similar report on the vegetable industry.

Special attention has been given by the Committee to the possibilities of co-operative farm machinery and labour pools in meeting the farmers' seasonal requirements. A close study is being made of the co-operative machinery scheme initiated by the Kaikohe Co-operative Dairy Co., Ltd., so that the experience gained may be used in the organization of similar schemes in other districts.

The major problem of lime-distribution has been considered and some progress made in co-operation with the Railways Department and cartage contractors to test the effectiveness of storage silos at strategic distribution points as a means of relieving the congestion that occurs during the period of peak demand for lime.

Other surveys carried out for the Committee were—

Import requirements of farming.

Co-ordination of the seasonal labour requirements of forestry and farming.

Need for renewal of pastures in the main dairying districts.

Wintering of dairy herds on swamp-land dairy farms.