

New Zealand has serious problems in soil erosion and land deterioration which must be faced in the immediate future. The main areas affected are the surface-sown hill country of the North Island and the tussock grasslands of the South Island. It is essential that as large an area as possible of the hill pasture lands of the Dominion be kept in production, for the extensive grazier supplies a very large proportion of the store and breeding stock for the fatteners on more fertile country. No land should be retired from farming without very careful investigation, for methods will undoubtedly be found to check erosion through better pasture management and spaced plantations, and much reverted country may be reclaimed when fertilizers and labour are available.

In addition to the adoption of improved soil, pasture, and stock-management practices, increased production will be greatly influenced by the rapidity with which deferred maintenance work can be carried out on farms. During the war, owing to shortage of labour and materials, fencing, scrub-cutting, destruction of noxious weeds, ditching, and the repair and replacement of farm buildings and houses have all been neglected, and must now be corrected as rapidly as circumstances permit.

Additional farm dwellings are required not only for the replacement of old houses and for the settlement of new farms, but also for the accommodation of farm workers and workers engaged in the processing of primary products. One of the difficulties confronting farm workers is to secure positions where houses are provided, and men often leave farm employment when they marry owing to lack of suitable accommodation. One possible solution for this difficulty would be the development of co-operative groups to provide general farm labour. A number of farmers by joining forces could well guarantee full employment and make the erection of houses for the accommodation of workers a sound investment.

In addition to the development of live-stock farming, there is scope for expansion of certain forms of more intensive land use. As population increases, the fruit, vegetable, poultry, and honey industries must be developed, and some of these industries provide quite substantial export surpluses. The Dominion produces high-grade pasture and lawn-grass seeds, and an expanding market for these may be built up in the future. With proper attention to quality through the Department's certification scheme it should be possible to expand seed-production of farm and horticultural seeds to provide domestic and export requirements.

The development of farming enterprises as outlined will provide greatly increased employment on farms, in industries which process and transport primary products, and in organizations servicing farmers. Farm employment should rise to 239,000 full-time units, and many more would be engaged in land development and reclamation work.

CO-ORDINATION OF EFFORT

This brief survey of the long-term development of farming would not be complete without some comment on how such a programme could be carried out. It is based on the belief that (1) international action will promote freer trade; (2) better standards of nutrition will be achieved; (3) the Dominion will be able to make the fullest use of its national resources; and (4) that expansion of dairying is likely to provide the most acceptable exports and at the same time allow of the fullest use of the Dominion's most fertile land. There will be difficulties and reverses in the expansion of world trade in foodstuffs, and the productive effort of the Dominion may at times have to be shifted to alternative products—*i.e.*, an increase in dried milk may be required at the expense of butter and cheese. During the transition period from war to peace and in the development stages of freer international trade some continuation of the wartime practice of targets of production will be necessary, and close collaboration between the Department of Agriculture and the farmers of New Zealand must be ensured at all times. The present collaboration with the Federated Farmers to increase production during the world food crisis must be continued as the foundation of an expanding phase of primary production to meet the export demands in the post-war era.

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