

limited quantities of the various ingredients available. Thus the best mashies possible in the circumstances were chosen for manufacture, but not necessarily the type of mash which would be recommended if supplies of poultry-foods were normal, which is a point about which some misconceptions appear to exist.

While the scheme in general has worked satisfactorily and has helped to bridge over a critical period, factors other than the actual supplies of raw materials in the Dominion have caused local and temporary breakdowns in a number of districts, principally in the North Island. There have been transport difficulties in moving supplies of bran and pollard from the South to the North Island, and occasional delays have been experienced in obtaining vital supplies of wheat from Australia.

Relief from the present difficult position cannot be anticipated until increased supplies of wheat, maize, and barley again become available to the poultry industry. The situation is also affected by any future decision regarding the present extraction rate of flour. However, everything possible has been done to reserve essential foods for the poultry industry, even to involving losses in supplies to other primary industries.

The poultry industry arranged for a cost of egg-production to be taken out by two economists, and, following representations to the Economic Stabilization Commission, was granted an increase in egg prices in line with the costs shown in the survey. These costs included feeding charges based upon an average of the ceiling prices for standard poultry-mashes delivered at poultry-farms.

*Improvement of Stock.*—The New Zealand Poultry Flock Improvement Plan, established in 1945, has made the satisfactory progress anticipated in last year's report. It was recorded then that 28 breeding-flocks had been accredited under the plan, while for 1946 the number was increased to 72 flocks. A further increase is anticipated for 1947. Equally important with this increase in actual numbers of flocks accredited is the stable and satisfactory interest generally evinced in the plan. There appear to be sound reasons for believing that this plan will result in an improvement in the breeding-flocks in the Dominion.

*Poultry-diseases.*—The disease problem among poultry is still one of major importance, and appreciable losses among poultry flocks result in an economic loss to the Dominion. Steps are being taken to combat this problem, and the appointment of two veterinary officers specializing in poultry-disease control for work in the field is anticipated in the near future. This will link up field work with the Animal Research Station, Wallaceville, and subsequently permit of increased research work in poultry pathology at that Station.

Advances have been made in the control of pullorum disease (*Salmonella pullorum*) in chicks by the blood-testing of breeding-stock which may be "carriers" of this disease, and approximately 110,000 birds were tested in 1945 and 135,000 birds in 1946. The comparable figure for 1941 was 700 birds.

*Rehabilitation of Returned Servicemen.*—During the period under review a further number of returned servicemen were trained in poultry-farming, while others were placed on farms following their period of training. Owing to the poultry-food position, these men were not encouraged to take up poultry-farms immediately following their training, or, alternatively, were encouraged to run other classes of stock with their poultry pending an improvement in the situation. Some have extended their period of training for the same reason. Poultry Instructors have kept in constant touch with those settled on poultry-farms and have given all practical assistance possible. It is apparent that this service from the Department must be continued in future, and, if possible, increased. A period of one year for training is a minimum one, and these men obviously require additional practical guidance when they settle on farms.

*The Poultry Demonstration Plant, Upper Hutt.*—The past twelve months has seen the complete reorganization of the table-poultry-production plant established at Upper Hutt during the war. This plant has now been taken over by the Department and developed along lines which it is felt will make the unit of interest and service to the poultry industry. The former departmental poultry unit—the Poultry Station, Wallaceville, which was established over twenty years ago—has been dismantled and the stock transferred to the new plant. The year's work has been made up almost entirely of dismantling the Poultry Station and creating modern poultry housing at Upper Hutt with the material salvaged from the old unit.

As it is now organized, the poultry demonstration plant is in a position to—

- (a) Carry out pedigree breeding and progeny testing;
- (b) Conduct management and feeding experiments with a commercial flock;
- (c) Conduct a breeders' egg-laying trial; and
- (d) Demonstrate and experiment with the production of table poultry.

It should be noted, however, that the size of the flock on this new plant has been substantially reduced temporarily, owing to the present food shortage. Thus the above-mentioned programme is only partially under way, and cannot be fully implemented until the food situation permits of a considerable increase in the size of flock carried.

Delegates from the annual Dominion Poultry Conference held in Wellington in March last visited the plant and expressed appreciation of the progress that has so far been made.

Requests for assistance from Poultry Instructors are still on the increase. Work associated with the present temporary standard poultry-mash scheme is taking up time which will be devoted in the future to increased educational activities as soon as the food-supply position can be rectified. For obvious reasons it will be easier to make progress in production and management efficiency within the industry when conditions return to normal, particularly in regard to food-supplies.