

SECRETARY'S REPORT

The Hon. A. H. NORDMEYER, Minister in Charge of the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research.

I HAVE the honour to submit herewith the annual report of the Department for the year 1946-47.

The end of 1946, which was a particularly difficult and busy year, saw the practical completion of the Department's reconversion of its activities from war to peace. Just as in the early days of the war it was a major task to convert the existing peacetime organization into a useful weapon for war, so in 1946 reconversion posed large and even more arduous problems in modifying facilities to meet the growing industrial requirements of peace.

Many of the staff recruited to serve the war effort in scientific work have been absorbed into peace-time establishment, but many of the younger members have left to complete their academic studies which were interrupted by the war. Other mature and skilled scientists who have had years of training have found avenues of advancement in University teaching or in the services of New Zealand industries and have thus indirectly extended the influence of the Department far beyond its own laboratories, while too many, perhaps, have been attracted overseas. The last-mentioned applies particularly to geologists. The necessary replacement personnel should be of the highest calibre if the Department's findings are to continue to be authoritative.

The work of the Department has been seriously hampered in many branches by the shortage of accommodation. This has meant that work has had to be carried on in temporary accommodation of a definitely unsuitable nature and has resulted in overcrowding within existing buildings. Such conditions cannot be regarded as ideal, and have prevented the inception of both research and service work.

Apart from general reorganization and a continuance of our normal research work three main new activities have been embarked upon :—

- (1) A Fuel Efficiency Service has been established in an effort to reduce the consumption of coal in industrial concerns.
- (2) The Information Bureau has been extended to deal more systematically with the exchange of information for scientific workers of the Department and of the Dominion generally, and its dissemination amongst interested Departments and the public.
- (3) A start has been made on the use of radioactive tracer elements in certain biological and chemical problems associated with soil processes.

Research on the nature of fats (particularly those occurring in dairy products) has been undertaken during the year by the Fats Research Laboratory. Basic statistical and biometrical control of a number of agricultural trials has been made possible by the work of the Biometrics Section. The rehabilitation of the Apia Observatory has proceeded during the year.

RESEARCH COUNCIL

The Research Council has met on five occasions during the year, and the Department is indebted for its advice and guidance. Its personnel was as follows :—

T. Rigg, K.B.E., M.A., M.Sc., F.R.I.C., F.R.S.N.Z., Chairman. J. C. Andrews, Ph.D., M.Sc. N. L. Edson, B.Med.Sc., M.B., Ch.B., Ph.D. (Cantab.). E. R. Hudson, B.Sc., B.Agr., Dip.C.A.C. R. O. Page, D.Sc. J. M. Ranstead, Esquire. W. Riddet, B.Sc. (Agric.), N.D.A., N.D.D. R. B. Tennent, N.D.D. D. F. Sandys Wunsch, M.A. (Oxon.), B.Sc. (McGill), M.I.Chem.E., Assoc. Inst.M.M. E. Marsden, C.M.G., C.B.E., M.C., D.Sc., F.R.S., F.R.S.N.Z. (Secretary). F. R. Callaghan, M.A., F.R.E.S. (Deputy Secretary).