

SECTION 3.—WHEAT, FLOUR AND BREAD INDUSTRIES

215. The following is a summary of the main features of the Wheat and Flour Controller's report for the year ended 31st January, 1947 :—

(a) GENERAL REVIEW

216. In many respects the year 1946 has proved more difficult than any year during the World War II. With famine conditions threatening many parts of the world, New Zealand co-operated with other countries in reducing her usage of wheat. The adoption in May, 1946, of an extraction rate of 80 per cent. for flour, the diversion of the restricted supplies of bran and pollard to the manufacturers of the standard mash for the poultry industry, and the limitation of supplies of wheat to poultry-keepers to no more than the previous year's level of supply, combined with publicity through official channels and the work of Famine Emergency Relief Committees, all assisted the conservation of wheat. On the present restricted scale, our annual requirements of wheat may be stated at 11,500,000 bushels, used as under in 1946 :—

	Bushels.
For flour for human consumption	7,200,000
For animal feedstuffs (poultry industry)	3,500,000
For seed	500,000
For other non-feed purposes	300,000
	11,500,000

217. Our pre-war annual consumption was about 9,500,000 bushels, but because of a lack of other grains and feedstuffs, such as maize, oats, barley, bran, and pollard, which were formerly obtainable from Australia, wheat has been called on to accept the burden. Were it not for the shortage of the items mentioned, our consumption of wheat would to-day be very much less than it is.

(b) NEW ZEALAND CROP

218. The New Zealand crop totalled 5,439,041 bushels from 161,049 acres. This was less than for many years, and the reduced acreage was, to a large measure, directly attributable to the unseasonable weather conditions which prevailed in many parts of New Zealand in the main sowing months. In addition, some spelling of land became necessary, and this factor is likewise reflected in the reduced acreage.

219. The price paid to the grower for the harvest of 1945-46 was 7s. 1d. per bushel f.o.b. grower's nearest port, March Tuscan basis. This compared with 6s. 6d. per bushel paid in the previous year. For the harvest of 1946-47 the price was fixed at 7s. 4d., and the same price will apply to the harvest of 1947-48, subject to the proviso that adjustment will be made in the 1947-48 price for further cost increases, should such increases eventuate.

(c) QUALITY

220. On the whole, the quality of flour has been of a high standard throughout the year, although certain initial difficulties became apparent and were connected entirely with the high extraction rate of flour. Through the co-operation of millers and bakers and the assistance of the Wheat Research Institute, matters settled down very quickly, and the public have accepted the 80 per cent. extraction flour with very little complaint.

(d) WHEATGROWERS' COMPENSATION SCHEME

221. Insurance payments totalled £4,630, spread over forty-four claims. As 1,256 acres were involved, the average compensation paid per acre was £3 13s. 9d. At the close of the financial year £26,142 stood to the credit of the Fund.