

## RURAL DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

### REPORT OF P. W. SMALLFIELD, DIRECTOR

During the year the organization and efficiency of the Division have been improved, and it is now sufficiently staffed to carry out the main duties for which it was formed. Appointments were made during the year to the positions of Land Utilization Officer, Engineer, and Rural Sociologist, and the only major vacancy still existing is that of Rural Economist.

In its work the Division has received assistance from the Fields, Horticulture, and Live-stock Divisions, and part of the field-work for the land-utilization and cost-of-production investigations carried out during the year was done by field officers of other Divisions. While the Division's own field-work was carried out mainly in the Auckland and Canterbury districts, it was extended toward the end of the year to the Wellington and Otago districts.

### FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION

The Division has continued to supply statistical, economic, and technical information to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. The periodic annual report, the preparation of which is an obligation of member countries, reviewed primary production for the 1946-47 season and the programme for the 1947-48 season, including not only agricultural and pastoral but also forestry and fishery production. The report also covered nutritional standards, international trade, and commodity programmes. The information contained in the periodic reports of member countries formed the basis of most of the working papers at the 1947 annual Conference of FAO, which was held at Geneva.

At the 1947 Conference fairly substantial changes were made to the constitution of FAO. The Executive Committee was replaced by a Council composed of representatives from eighteen member countries to facilitate the aims of the organization in fostering the orderly production and distribution of world supplies of food and raw materials. The Council, which meets at regular intervals, has absorbed the International Emergency Food Council, which now becomes a committee of FAO and will continue to operate as long as the present world food crisis lasts.

It is expected that the Council of FAO will achieve many of the aims of the Organization through the development of inter-governmental commodity agreements providing for a limited degree of price stabilization and the creation of buffer stocks. Worthy of note in this respect has been the recent attempt to establish an international wheat agreement.

### LAND-UTILIZATION

A statistical review of the sheep industry of New Zealand was completed during the year and copies issued to Government Departments, farmers' organizations, and agricultural colleges. A similar review of the dairy industry was begun, as well as land-utilization studies of selected counties; field-work for the survey of Hutt and Makara Counties was completed.

These surveys have presented district changes in live-stock numbers and traced the causes leading to increases or decreases. Though there has been an over-all increase in pasture carrying-capacity during the past two decades, it has not been uniform over the Dominion and has been restricted to areas where pasture top-dressing has been a regular practice. Of the 43,000,000 acres of occupied land in New Zealand, only on about 7,000,000 acres, comprising the flat and undulating land, is the fertility level being raised,