

STATISTICAL SECTION

The Statistical Section has handled a greatly increased volume of work during the year. In addition to the routine work of compiling statistics and tabulating data collected by the field staff, the Section has furnished information on a wide range of subjects in response to requests from other Divisions of the Department, other Government Departments, foreign Legations, and private individuals both in the Dominion and overseas.

The tabulation and analysing of data collected in the potato and apple and pear cost surveys was a major undertaking, and the results have been transmitted to the Stabilization Commission for consideration in determining prices for these products. Some of the information collected in the potato survey has been summarized for publication in the *New Zealand Journal of Agriculture*. The preparation of tables, maps, and graphs for the "Statistical Review of the Sheep Industry" was also a large undertaking.

The regular compilation of butter, cheese, and butterfat production statistics has been carried on as usual, but to these has been added those for dried and condensed milk, &c. The compilation of stock slaughtering statistics has also been continued.

RURAL SOCIOLOGY

The Rural Sociology Section was strengthened by the appointment of a Rural Sociologist and three graduates in home science.

The survey of the rural areas of Marlborough and Nelson which was completed in 1946-47 was published during the year in the *New Zealand Journal of Agriculture*. The survey studied the relation between the development of primary and other industry, the origin, progress, and location of towns, and the services they provide for the inter-dependent countryside.

Two additional research projects have been undertaken: one relates to housing design in Vincent County, and the other to water-supplies for farm homes in South Canterbury.

The formation of Country Girls' Clubs, sponsored by the Federation of Young Farmers' Clubs, has been helped by the Section. Seven clubs have been formed in the South Island and two in the North.

The work of the district officers has covered the preparation of articles for the women's section of the *New Zealand Journal of Agriculture*, lectures to country women's organizations, and field-day and farm-school gatherings. Thirty-four articles were published in the *Journal*, covering housing, room design, cooking, needlework, furniture, and minor topics.

The demand for lectures is expected to increase, and it is intended that all future farm schools and field-days arranged for farmers by the Fields Division will provide lecture and discussion periods for country women. During the coming winter departmental show exhibits will incorporate a section for country women.

The organization of the Division and the Rural Sociology Section is now sufficiently advanced for long term work in rural social research to be planned to cover rural and urban population trends and migration, standards of living, and culture. The initial work on population trends is now being mapped out, and a socio-metric scale is being devised to enable the standard of living of a farm family to be appraised with a minimum of effort. Development of this scale and the testing of its validity and reliability will be a long process, but when completed will provide a valuable tool for sociological research.