

yield, and the quantity of potatoes shipped during the year from Timaru has been little more than half the quantity shipped during the previous year. Had it not been for the very good yields in North Canterbury the position with regard to supplies throughout the year would have been serious, and at one time there was some doubt as to whether there would be sufficient potatoes to meet all requirements until the new crop becomes available in November, 1947, but it now seems certain that supplies available will be sufficient and that there will be little or no shortage. New potatoes for harvesting during October and November onwards have been planted in fairly substantial quantities and crops are reported as looking well, and indications are that supplies will be sufficient over the summer months.

For 1948 main-crop requirements the contract system which has been in existence now over the past five years under which contracts are made by members of the New Zealand Grain, Seed, and Produce Merchants' Federation on behalf of the Division is being continued, and while the acreage to be planted in potatoes is suffering from the competition of other and more payable crops with less risk of weather conditions, and less dependence on labour supplies, it is nevertheless hoped that the area being planted during September, October, and November will be sufficient to provide enough to meet consumers' needs during 1948. During the year two price increments, each 10s. per ton, were approved by the Stabilization Commission, and these increases should have proved helpful to growers. Growers' costs were substantially increased recently as a result of the removal of the subsidies on sacks and fertilizers, increased railage, and also increased labour-costs, but an announcement was made to the effect that the Government did not expect growers to carry these increases, and that amended prices would be granted to provide for them.

The target area set for the production year 1947-48 is 25,000 acres, but there is very little prospect of this being reached. However, under favourable conditions 22,000 to 23,000 acres should be sufficient to meet requirements in an average year with an average crop yield.

ONIONS

The 1946 harvest proved to be just sufficient to last until the new crop commenced to become available in December, and there was no shortage between the end of the old season's onions and the commencement of marketing of the new season's.

Good weather conditions were experienced for harvesting the 1947 crop in February, March, April, and the onions were gathered in good, sound condition and proved to be of better keeping-quality than has been the case during the past two seasons. Growers had no difficulty in disposing of their onions as they desired during the early months of the season, and with the good quality harvested more growers than is usually the case were able to hold their onions for delivery later in the year. In consequence onion deliveries have been spread more evenly during the year and they are still available in sufficient supplies to meet consumers' requirements until December next, when the new onions commence to come on the market. There was no surplus for export other than the small quantities customarily sent to Samoa, Fiji, and other Pacific Islands.

For 1948 the area is estimated to be slightly in excess of the area planted in onions last year, and should be ample to meet our needs.

BARLEY

Despite the fact that the Australian crop last season was a very good one, the prices they were able to obtain from Europe were so high that importation into New Zealand for feed purposes was quite impossible, and there is no indication yet of any improvement in that respect during the coming season. It seems unlikely that the Division will be able to import any barley from Australia for poultry or pig feeding purposes for the next two years at least.