

MAIZE

The Maize Marketing Committee has continued to operate throughout 1947 with general satisfaction and with the regulation of distribution of supplies fairly to all parties concerned. As a result of special efforts made last year to obtain an increase in the area to be grown in maize, this year's commercial area showed an increase of nearly 50 per cent., from 6,300 acres to approximately 9,000 acres, and the season has been an exceptionally good one, with fairly heavy yields in most areas, particularly in Poverty Bay. The production in the 1946-47 season was approximately 58,000 sacks, but this year it is estimated that the quantity to be marketed will be between 90,000 and 100,000 sacks. This increased quantity is, of course, due in the main to the increased area, but also to a considerable extent to the increased use of specially grown Pfister hybrid seed maize, which is giving substantially increased yields, particularly in Poverty Bay. The increase in acreage is due to a very large extent to special efforts put forward by the Native Department, who did remarkably good work in getting larger areas planted by Maori farmers, and also under the Department's own land-development schemes, and a total of approximately 2,800 acres were grown either by the Native Department, or under its control, last year, an increase of 2,000 acres over that grown in the previous year. This has contributed very substantially to the increased quantity of maize available for distribution to poultry-farmers this year.

HOPS

This year's crop, while still well below an average one, was much better than that harvested in 1946, when the total yield, the smallest ever recorded, amounted to only 1,829 bales. Deliveries from growers this year totalled 2,470 bales, and while this is well below the actual requirements of New Zealand brewers, nevertheless it is hoped that, by rationing the available quantity out with the small carry-over of hops imported from America last year, this year's crop will be sufficient to enable brewers to carry on until the new season's crop comes in at the end of March and during April. Brewers are impressed with the difficulties in regard to dollar funds and are most anxious to avoid any necessity of importation from America, if that can possibly be avoided.

It has not been possible during the past two years for the Hop Marketing Committee to make hops available in packets for general sale to the public, as has been customary in the past, but small quantities have been provided to meet special individual cases of hardship where persons have experienced difficulty in obtaining yeast supplies for breadmaking in backblock areas.

During the year, with the support and approval of the Department of Agriculture and this Division, two grower members of the Hop Marketing Committee visited Tasmania in order to obtain first-hand information on the methods of hop-growing adopted there, and the cultivation, manuring, and irrigation practised, and any other information they could obtain that would be helpful to New Zealand growers. Hop-growers and their agents in Tasmania proved most helpful, and the growers concerned returned to New Zealand with a valuable amount of information which should have the effect of substantially improving the yields obtainable in Nelson, which in recent years have averaged little more than half the yield per acre obtained in Tasmania. Arrangements were made by them for the importation of 5,000 sets of different varieties grown in Tasmania, and these have since come to hand and have been planted out by the Department of Agriculture in twelve months' quarantine at the Government Experimental Station at Te Kauwhata. It is hoped that if these plants prove free from disease they may be distributed to growers next year, and ultimately result in improving the quality and yield of hops in the Nelson district. Special efforts have been made by growers to obtain an increased area this year, but these have been hampered by the very heavy outlay necessary to install a hop-garden at the present time, due mainly to the scarcity