

### SOIL BIOTICS

*Soil Ecology*.—An account of the influence exerted by various native plants on soil-formation in Fiordland and Southland has been prepared for publication.

*Biological Assay*.—A technique for using plants to detect the minimum level of available boron in pot experiments with a range of soils is not yet completed. Beans, radish, and beet have proved valuable indicator plants.

Trace-element trials have been continued on soils that are known to be difficult to farm.

Fertility trials in which commercial compost is being compared with other nitrogenous manures and mineral fertilizers are in progress.

The *Aspergillus* method for evaluating available copper in soil has proved quite satisfactory for comparing the available copper status of New Zealand soils. The available copper in the sand and silt loam of the farm lands of North Auckland is very low. Further surveys are being made.

### WILD-LIFE RESEARCH

The survey of the wild-life position in New Zealand was completed at the end of 1947 in the form of an "Interim Report on Wild-life Problems in New Zealand." The three volumes of this cyclostyled report cover sixteen of the economically most important introduced mammals. It was submitted to a conference of representatives of Government Departments and public bodies interested in wild life held on 3rd February, 1947. This conference unanimously advised the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research "that sufficient research is not being done at the present time on wild-life problems." It also recommended the establishment of a Wild-life Advisory Committee of the Council which would make recommendations with regard to problems of research and its organization.

A supplementary survey is being undertaken of nine species not included in the interim report. It is hoped to publish the completed survey as a bulletin during the coming year.

### COMMONWEALTH AGRICULTURAL BUREAUX

The Imperial Agricultural Bureaux, which were established by the participating Governments of the British Empire as a result of the 1927 Imperial Agricultural Research Conference in London, have recently been redesignated the Commonwealth Agricultural Bureaux.

New Zealand is represented on the Executive Council of the Bureaux by Dr. E. Marsden, Scientific Adviser, London. The funds of the Bureaux are provided by the participating Governments in agreed proportions.

The Bureaux are continuing to render a most valuable service to New Zealand agricultural research workers, principally through their abstracting journals and technical communications.

### SCIENTIFIC LIAISON SERVICES

During the year the Department's scientific liaison services have been reorganized and strengthened. Dr. E. Marsden, formerly Secretary of the Department in Wellington, was appointed by the Government to the position of Scientific Adviser, London, and the Scientific Liaison Office in London was placed under his control. Approval has since been obtained to the appointment of an Assistant Scientific Liaison Officer in London, and an officer will leave to take up the appointment at an early date.