

When the Committee was first set up it comprised a larger number of members, but the number was reduced when it was reconstituted in 1937. All present members except the Chairman have held their appointments since that date. This record of service prompted the following tribute from the present Chairman, the Hon. A. H. Nordmeyer :—

“ I wish to place on record my appreciation of the loyal service rendered by the Deputy Chairman and other members of the Wheat Committee, who have all served continuously since the time when the Wheat Committee was reconstituted in February, 1937. At all times the Committee has given full co-operation, help, and advice to the responsible Minister, and the Committee's work has greatly benefited the allied industries of wheatgrowing, flour-milling, and bread-baking, as well as consumers generally.”

SECTION 4.—TOBACCO BOARD

The following is a summary of the report of the Tobacco Board for the period under review.

(a) GROWTH OF INDUSTRY

This is the Board's eleventh year of administration, and the statistics show that crop production has risen from 1,197,161 lb. in 1936 to 4,706,723 lb. in 1947, which is an increase of approximately 293 per cent. The harvest for 1947 exceeded that for the previous year by approximately 15 per cent. This continued increase reflects the policy of the Government and the Board, although the rate of expansion is now being affected by such factors as the shortage of labour and the shortage of building-materials to provide accommodation for labour.

(b) 1946-47 CROP

The 1946-47 season was a very favourable one for the tobacco crop. Despite cold conditions in the spring and early summer, the late summer and autumn conditions more than compensated for this, and the very favourable harvesting conditions of the previous season were repeated. November, 1946, was the coldest for ten years, and this had the effect of retarding the plants both in the beds and in the field. Falls of snow were experienced on the hills right through December. Total rainfall was low, but falls were such that the maximum benefit was given to the plants, thus offsetting the disadvantage of quantity. Fine, sunny weather prevailed through February and March and into early April, which, in addition to favouring the maximum development of leaf, ripened the heavy crop rapidly, and enabled picking to be completed under ideal conditions. The leaf varied somewhat in quality, but in general was of good body and texture and sound.

(c) PRICES OF LEAF

The basic average prices for the 1947 harvest were 2s. 2d. per pound for flue-cured and 1s. 11d. per pound for air-dried leaf. These prices were given effect to by the issue of Price Order No. 682 (Raw-leaf Tobacco) by the Price Tribunal, and were the same as those for the preceding year. The minimum price below which leaf cannot be sold remains at 1s. 2d. per pound as fixed by the Board of Trade (Raw Tobacco Price) Regulations 1943.

(d) MINIMUM PERCENTAGE OF DOMESTIC LEAF

During the past year the minimum percentage of domestic leaf which all manufacturers were required to use in their total manufacture was maintained at 30 per cent.