

## PART V.—ORGANIZATIONS ASSOCIATED WITH THE DEPARTMENT

### SECTION 1.—PRICE CONTROL DIVISION

The following report covers the operation of price control during the past year :—

#### (a) GENERAL

Important developments in the administration of price-control in New Zealand occurred in the year under review. Until 30th November, 1947, the Price Tribunal continued to operate under former legislation and regulations, but, following a review of post-war developments, the Control of Prices Act, 1947, was passed, and came into force on 1st December. The principal changes brought about by the Act are dealt with below.

Although there was a certain easement in the general supply position over the year, demand continued at a high level owing to the sustained purchasing-power of consumers. The strict control over the prices of goods and services which has been maintained since 1939 was continued.

#### (b) THE CONTROL OF PRICES ACT, 1947

The Control of Prices Act, which drew on more than eight years' experience by the Price Tribunal, consolidated and extended the powers and functions formerly exercised mainly under Emergency Regulations. It defined the general duties of the Tribunal as the fixing of prices for goods and services, the investigation of complaints with respect to prices, the maintenance of a survey of prices, the institution of proceedings for offences, and the taking of such other action as might be necessary to prevent profiteering or the exploitation of the public.

The Act gave legislative recognition to the necessity for permanent price-control to ensure that the benefits of a full-employment policy, with its consequent sustained pressure of purchasing-power on production, are enjoyed by the community as a whole.

Continued public confidence has been promoted by the provision that, except in certain circumstances, the sittings of the Tribunal should be open to the public.

Following the passing of this Act, the Price Tribunal has become a separate body from the Price Control Division.

All administrative and enforcement duties are performed by the Division, and the Tribunal, in accordance with powers given to it by the Act, has delegated certain powers to the Director. The Act provides that any person directly or indirectly affected by any act or decision of the Director acting pursuant to such delegation may at any time appeal therefrom to the Tribunal.

#### (c) THE PRICE CONTROL DIVISION

A separate Division of the Department of Industries and Commerce, known as the Price Control Division, has been constituted. Mr. H. L. Wise, a member of the Tribunal since its inception in 1939, was appointed as Director of Price Control and administrative head of the Division.

Since the establishment of the Division, a review of pricing procedures has been undertaken, and as a result comprehensive plans for implementing simplified pricing schemes in certain trades have been prepared, and are under discussion with the trade organizations concerned.