

valuable assistance both to the Department and growers of the crops. The Commercial Advisory Committee also continued to give valuable assistance in implementing controls which are still necessary in connection with the export and import of seeds.

SEED-TESTING STATION

For the year ended December, 1948, over 45,500 tests were completed at the Seed-testing Station. In the first nine months of the year there were greater demands on the service than in the same period of 1947 (a record year), but during the last quarter fewer samples were received. The number of tests carried out during the past two years has been as follows :—

Test.	1947.	1948.
Purity	35,623	32,451
Germination	48,922	45,158
Ultra-violet ray	6,087	3,952
Picric acid	6,398	6,231

Staff.—Shortage of staff continues to hamper the work of the Station and the strength of the testing and clerical staffs is well below the level required for a complete and satisfactory service. The appointment of a Seed Research Officer fills a long-felt need, and further research officers will be appointed as suitable recruits can be secured.

Pre-harvest Examination of Rye-grass Seed.—Substations staffed by five officers of the Seed-testing Station were established at Christchurch and Timaru for the examination of blind-seed disease. A total of 1,371 samples was examined.

Seed-purchasing.—During the calendar year 1948, 698 requisitions were received and seed to a total value of £145,000 was purchased.

Instruction and Publicity.—Radio talks and lectures have done much to bring the work of the Station before the public. Exhibits were staged at various A. and P. shows. There has been a great increase in the number of students, seed-growers, and farmers visiting the Station.

FIELD EXPERIMENTAL WORK

Expansion of the research activities of the Extension Division continues rapidly. In so far as the number of experiments conducted each year reflects this expansion, the following figures gave striking evidence of the progress made since the war years :—

Number of experiments open as at—

31st March, 1945	268
31st March, 1946	331
31st March, 1947	578
31st March, 1948	872
31st March, 1949	1,105

However, these figures do not tell the whole story, for, in addition to this increase in numbers, there have been an increase in the complexity of the average trial and an improvement in the care and security with which it is conducted.

The majority of these experiments are located on farmers' properties and are being conducted under the farmers' co-operative experimental scheme throughout New Zealand. It has been found possible to conduct many complex experiments with annual crops in this manner, but for most pasture-measurement trials and those experiments which involve the management of farm stock it is necessary to conduct the work on research areas and demonstration farms. In the initial stages of an investigation special research areas are frequently essential.