

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 twelfth year of administration, and within that period crop production has risen from 1,197,161 lb. in 1936 to 4,770,827 lb. in 1948, which is an increase of approximately 398 per cent. The harvest for 1948 exceeded that for the previous year by approximately 1·3 per cent.

The continued increase in production is in keeping with the objectives of the policy of the Government and the Board, and further expansion could be achieved if more labour and building-materials were available. The problem of obtaining more labour is bound up with the provision of additional housing-accommodation for workers.

(b) 1947-48 CROP

Climatic conditions during the past growing season were abnormal, unusually heavy falls of rain being followed by prolonged dry spells. In spite of this, the crop generally made excellent growth, demonstrating the wonderful recuperative ability of the tobacco-plant. The early spring, which was very wet, with an average rainfall of 8 in. per month, considerably delayed the preparation of the land. November was dry and sunny and favourable for the planting of the crop. Heavy rain, however, in late November and early December caused much surface flooding and packing of the land. In mid-January heavy rain was again experienced, but most of it ran off the surface. Where, however, water could not get away rapidly the tobacco was drowned. A prolonged spell of dry weather followed this with conditions ideal in February. When rain came late in March, it was again of the flooding type.

The crop was again a heavy one. Mild autumn conditions permitted harvesting to take place with a minimum of loss, but the alternating extremes of wet and dry weather were reflected in some variation in the quality of the leaf. Nevertheless, the bulk was good with the leaf sound and bright.

(c) PRICES OF LEAF

The basic average prices for the 1948 harvest were increased over the previous season's basic prices. An application to the Price Control Division by the New Zealand Tobacco-growers' Federation in March, 1948, for an increased price per pound for new leaf resulted in approval of an increase of 3½d. per pound for both flue-cured and air-dried tobacco. The new basic average prices, which were given effect to by Price Order No. 890 (Raw-leaf Tobacco) are 2s. 5½d. per pound for flue-cured and 2s. 2½d. per pound for air-dried leaf. The minimum price of 1s. 2d. per pound below which leaf cannot be sold as fixed by the Board of Trade (Raw Tobacco Price) Regulations 1943 remains unaltered.

(d) MINIMUM PERCENTAGE OF DOMESTIC LEAF

During the 1947-48 season the minimum percentage of domestic leaf which all manufacturers in New Zealand were required to use in their total manufacture was 30 per cent., this being the same percentage as for the previous season.

(e) TOBACCO RESEARCH

The amount contributed by the Board towards the cost of maintaining the Tobacco Research Station for the period ended 31st July, 1948, was £387 12s. 2d., which, when added to previous contributions, brings the total amount to £9,054.