

the Department. It is hoped to shortly extend State assistance to the industry in several directions, such as by the appointment of a resident Poultry Instructor for Auckland, and the establishment of a poultry-station near Christchurch. Assistance may also be rendered by the State in connection with cold storage for eggs, official supervision of the recognized egg-laying competitions, and the training and establishment of returned soldiers in poultry-keeping. The question of the prohibition of the entry of Asiatic egg-pulp into the Dominion is now receiving the favourable consideration of the Government. Commendable activity in the interests of the industry is being shown by the New Zealand Poultry-keepers' Association, which body, it is pleasing to note, is now well in touch with the Department. Increased production and reasonable prices to the consumer should be the leading aims of the industry to-day. The production of eggs in the Dominion is still a considerable way behind the normal demand, and the table-poultry branch remains on a comparatively small scale. While the consumer must be prepared to pay a fair price, eggs should not have to be classed as a luxury for large sections of the population during a great part of the year.

While the past year was rather a poor one as regards honey-production, owing to an adverse season in several important districts, the beekeeping industry may be said to be steadily "coming into its own" in respect of fair values for its output. Improved returns both from the local and export markets have been largely the result of improved organization. The instructional assistance afforded the industry by the Department has been systematized and rendered more effective by the development of the apiary at the Ruakura Farm of Instruction on experimental lines. Recently an important step for the betterment of the industry has been taken by the inauguration of registration of all apiaries, which will enable effective control to be maintained in regard to disease and other factors.

The movement for the promotion of scientific agriculture—practically "better farming"—in the Dominion has been definitely advanced during the year through the medium of the Fields Division, in conjunction with the Biology Section, of the Department. The acknowledged need for co-ordination and systematization in connection with agricultural research and experimental work throughout the country has materialized in an organization which it is trusted may be the nucleus of development of the greatest value in the not-distant future. Instituted on sound but simple lines, at a very moderate expenditure, the Central Development Farm, at Weraroa, has been designed as the guiding and controlling centre of the Department's activities in field husbandry. Fitting into the same organization is a system of student-assistantships, by which successive bodies of young men will be trained on practical lines giving them the knowledge necessary for the work of the fields instruction and inspection staff. This will go far towards overcoming the difficulty which frequently exists at present of obtaining suitable occupants for what should be expert positions, and of satisfying the ever-increasing demand on the part of the rural community for the services of experts in various branches. It should be clearly understood, however, that Weraroa is not an agricultural college. Rather is the conception of its training side akin to that of the noted Kew institution, which (in the sphere of horticulture) turns out yearly numbers of men, many of whom are to be found in important positions all over the world. There is no reason, however, why the training received at Weraroa by student-assistants should not be allowed to rank as practical courses in connection with a degree in agriculture taken at one or other of our University colleges.

The Department's experimental farms in other districts will operate in due co-ordination with Weraroa, although specialization in certain directions will be given scope at the former stations. It is also very probable that the fine establishment at Ruakura may be used largely in connection with the training of returned soldiers, and later on, when the country has settled down again to normal conditions, for teachers and others, in co-operation with the Education authorities. The development of the Ashburton Experimental Farm has established the Department's field experimental work in middle Canterbury on a good footing, and similar experimental or demonstration farms for other South Island districts are in view.

A very useful approach to an experimental farm proper consists in local demonstration areas of fair size, several of which are now being organized by the Department in different parts of the Dominion. An area of some 30 acres at Gore, in Southland, may be mentioned as an example. These local areas, which are more or less superseding the system of individual co-operative experiments, will be chiefly the concern of the reconstituted body of Fields Supervisors, which forms another part of the reorganization of the Fields Division effected during the year. The superseding of the old co-operative experiments will set free a considerable amount of money for the new local areas.