

The production of maize in New Zealand is carried on more particularly in the Bay of Plenty and Poverty Bay districts, and the product is sold for consumption mainly in the northern part of the North Island. Figures showing the acreage sown, the total yield, and the importations into New Zealand in each of the years ended 31st March, 1919 to 1927, are as under :—

Year ended 31st March,					New Zealand Production.		Imports into New Zealand.
					Acreage sown.	Yield.	
						Bushels.	Bushels.
1919	..	..	..	..	9,792	413,595	95,182
1920	..	..	..	..	9,064	405,775	22,014
1921	..	..	..	..	11,514	500,845	89,318
1922	..	..	..	..	10,522	488,452	68,530
1923	..	..	..	..	9,732	505,776	16,752
1924	..	..	..	..	8,208	405,855	35,562
1925	..	..	..	..	8,621	426,875	123,032
1926	..	..	..	..	8,508	423,700	132,153
1927	..	..	..	..	10,288*	491,122*	148,066

* Interim figures only.

These figures show that importations are tending to increase, and that, with the exception of the past year, production has shown no appreciable upward movement.

The Commission has given close consideration to local costs of production and transportation, and has had under review the landed costs and selling-prices of imported maize. From the facts in this matter we are of the opinion that the duty is at present higher than is necessary, and we have accordingly to recommend that it be reduced to 1s. per cental.

PIG IRON.

The manufacture of pig iron in New Zealand is an industry of recent establishment. The Onakaka Iron and Steel Co., Ltd., has its works in the Nelson Province, and is manufacturing from local ores. The evidence shows that the quality of the pig iron now produced by the company is, in general, giving satisfaction to users. The production of pig iron at Onakaka has been as follows :—

							Tons.
Year ended 31st October, 1922	..	..	..	..	..	..	64
„ 1923	..	..	..	..	..	..	Nil.
„ 1924	..	..	..	..	..	..	849
„ 1925	..	..	..	..	..	..	Nil.
„ 1926	..	..	..	..	..	..	3,270
Nine months to 31st July, 1927	..	..	..	..	..	..	4,106

The imports of pig iron during recent years have been as under :—

Year ended 31st December,				Country of Origin.			
				United Kingdom.	India.	Other Countries.	Total.
				Tons.	Tons.	Tons.	Tons.
1922	..	..	..	2,334	851	1,113	4,298
1923	..	..	..	5,081	2,942	789	8,812
1924	..	..	..	3,609	4,446	458	8,513
1925	..	..	..	4,409	2,573	231	7,213
1926	..	..	..	2,257	2,714	45	5,016
Six months of 1927	..	..	..	585	1,298	5	1,888

An investigation of prices shows that for some years after the establishment of the local industry in 1922 prices were declining, until in August, 1925, local pig iron was selling at approximately £6 2s. 6d. per ton c.i.f. main ports, or nearly £2 per ton less than in 1922. The figures of imports show that to an increasing extent the competition is coming from Indian iron, which is stated to be of somewhat the same quality as the local product. The two irons are commonly used for similar purposes.