

IMPORTS.

The following table shows in thousands of superficial feet the imports of timber which compete directly with New Zealand native timber:—

—	1931.	1932.	1933.	1934.	1935.
	(1,000 ft.)	(1,000 ft.)	(1,000 ft.)	(1,000 ft.)	(1,000 ft.)
Cedar	52	7	2	18	149
Oregon	2,950	1,081	1,354	3,128	3,472
Hemlock	662	..	..	..	18
Redwood.. ..	1,028	291	461	751	9
Butter-box shooks..	2,879	1,473	1,815	848	15
Cheese-crate shooks	732	175	5	..	..
Total	8,303	3,027	3,637	4,745	3,663

TOBACCO-GROWING INDUSTRY.

An Act entitled the Tobacco-growing Industry Act was passed in 1935 as the result of repeated requests by the industry for some legislative authority under which the industry could be controlled and production, manufacture, sales, and exports conducted on proper businesslike lines instead of under haphazard methods which existed in many instances in the past.

The industry had been in a more or less chaotic condition by reason of the fact that the production of leaf had borne no relation under the then existing conditions to demand or consumption. The fact that there had been over-production in the industry had been well established.

Production had proceeded more or less haphazardly without any regard to market requirements, and, in spite of the increased use of New-Zealand-grown leaf by New Zealand tobacco-manufacturers, production had outrun demand. Growers had not known from time to time just what quantity of leaf it was necessary to produce, or how much, within reasonable limits, they were likely to get for it when it was produced. Surplus leaf produced over and above contracts and the resulting stocks of leaf on hand had represented a danger to the industry and had prejudiced the position from the growers' point of view.

The primary object of the legislation was to stabilize the industry and to encourage and gradually develop production and consumption of New-Zealand-grown tobacco so far as it was a reasonably economic proposition.

In accordance with the provisions of the Act, a Board, known as the Tobacco Board, has been created. Members of the Board were appointed by the present Government on the 20th April, 1936. The Board consists of a representative of the Government, four representatives of growers, and four representatives of manufacturers. The Secretary of the Department of Industries and Commerce has been appointed as the representative of the Government, and, in accordance with the provisions of the Act, the Government representative is the Chairman of the Board. An officer of the Department of Industries and Commerce has been appointed Secretary of the Board.

The provisions of the Act in relation to the sale and purchase of tobacco-leaf under warrant and the growing of tobacco under license have been put into operation since the inception of the Board. It is a function of the Board not only to try and increase the use of New-Zealand-grown tobacco within the Dominion itself, but also, in conjunction with the Department of Industries and Commerce, to endeavour to open up and develop a market for it overseas. With this end in view a trial shipment of tobacco was forwarded to the United Kingdom last year, and very favourable comments were made as to the quality of the leaf supplied and as to the possibilities of developing a worth-while market in that country.

This year it is proposed to send a larger quantity, and arrangements are now well in hand for the export of this leaf. As a result of the shipment of this season's leaf, which is about to be made, much valuable information will be obtained as to the quality of leaf most suited to the requirements of the English manufacturers and as to the desirability of the Board taking active steps to develop the industry from the point of view of catering regularly for the requirements of an overseas market.

The importance of the tobacco-growing industry as a field for the absorption of labour is being steadily kept in mind by the Board, and also by the Department of Industries and Commerce, and consideration is now being given both by the Board and the Department to a long-range plan for the development of the industry.

At a recent meeting of the Board a resolution was passed recommending to the Government that a minimum price for leaf for the season ending 31st March, 1937, should be fixed. This recommendation is now under the consideration of the Government.

ONION GROWING AND MARKETING.

Representations have recently been made to the Government concerning the desirability of action being taken to develop the onion-growing industry in New Zealand, and particularly to safeguard onion-growers from the effects of unnecessary importations of onions from overseas.