

the previous season of 304,982 acres. Threshings for the January-April, 1937, period disclose a per-acre yield of 47.19 bushels, as against an actual yield over the whole Dominion for the 1935-36 season of 42.61 bushels. Up to the end of April, 1937, the returns show that 40,126 acres of oats have been threshed for a total yield of 1,893,697 bushels. The area threshed covers 65 per cent. of the area in oats and which was expected to be threshed.

It is estimated that 25,300 acres were sown in barley for the 1936-37 season, as against an actual area harvested the previous season of 21,582 acres. The barley crop generally has been fairly good and the grain of plump quality, but discoloured to some extent by the damp weather. It is obvious that there will be insufficient barley for Dominion requirements, and some importations will of necessity have to be made. The great bulk of the barley is for malting purposes, and a serious endeavour has been made of recent months to get brewers, maltsters, and other users of malting barley to contract for their full requirements for 1937-38. I am hopeful that the Department's endeavours in this direction will bear fruit and that the area to be sown to barley for harvesting next season will show an appreciable increase on that for a good many years past.

The area in potatoes in 1936-37 was estimated at 23,300 acres, as against an actual area for the Dominion for the previous season of 22,958 acres. As a result of the certification of potatoes by the Department the yields per acre have shown an appreciable increase and, further, the quality of the potatoes is a big advance on recent times. One is hopeful that in a very short space of time practically all crops of potatoes grown will be the progeny of certified seed, and when this position is brought about the state generally as regards yield and quality will in no way be comparable with that which obtained prior to the advent of potato certification. This year there has been a very strong demand for table potatoes from South America, and some quite large shipments have been made. Up to date the following are particulars of consignments of table potatoes shipped from the South Island to South American ports:—

	Tons.
s.s. "Hororata"	985
s.s. "Coptic"	1,145
s.s. "Port Caroline"	755
s.s. "Mahia"	1,325
s.s. "Norfolk"	1,508
s.s. "Tairoa"	2,566
s.s. "Westmoreland"	1,201
s.s. "Port Chalmers"	1,606
s.s. "Pakeha"	2,108
Total	13,199

It is expected that the season will close with total shipments amounting to 25,000 tons.

It must be fully recognized that the market in South America for New Zealand potatoes is of such value to the farmers of the Dominion that every possible step has to be taken to conserve it. The Department is fully conscious of this necessity, and has taken every step to see that only the primest quality of potatoes free from disease and mechanical injury are exported. Standardized new packs are being insisted upon, and it is fully anticipated that the condition, quality, and attractiveness of the shipments which have been exported this season will receive very favourable comment from the importers and result in increased trade in the future. It is felt that the Department is performing a real service to both potato-growers and merchants in the supervision of the potato-export trade, and for the coming season plans are being formulated which will result in its stabilization.

INSTRUCTION IN AGRICULTURE.

This phase of the Division's work, looked upon as possibly its main function, has been given as much attention as possible in the circumstances, but the amount of instruction imparted has not been as great as one could wish, owing to officers being engaged on new spheres of work and other urgent matters which had to receive attention. There is the point, however, that, concurrently with such work as certification, field experiments, and so forth, limited general advisory work to a certain extent is performed. This applies to practically all the ramifications of the Division and in connection with each service instructional work is automatically being carried out. The work of the field officers of my Division may be graded, broadly, into four divisions—(a) agricultural instruction, (b) crop certification, (c) investigational work, and (d) regulatory services. Most of these activities, particularly those in the first three groups, have a direct relationship with the work of the Plant Research Bureau, and it is considered that the extension into the field of the findings of the research officers of the Bureau cannot but have an excellent effect on the agriculture generally of New Zealand. In many instances there is very close co-operation between the Fields Division and the different sections of the Bureau, but, to my mind, there are a few cases in which this co-operation could be improved. I have recently prepared a statement on the whole matter and am making arrangements for this statement to be considered at an early meeting of the Plant Research Bureau Committee. As a result of the deliberations of the Committee I feel sure that in those few matters where the co-operation is not all that could be desired a wonderful improvement will be effected.