

Minister of Industries and Commerce as subject to license, while a complete plan for the rehabilitation of the flax industry has been brought to finality with the concurrence of those engaged in the industry.

The Minister is the appeal authority with regard to licensing decisions of the Bureau, and under powers conferred upon him by the Act he has appointed Sir Francis Frazer to inquire into and report to him upon the subject-matter of all appeals.

At the moment the Bureau is examining proposals for the establishment of several new industries in the Dominion, and licenses have already been granted for the manufacture of asbestos-cement products, an important new industry, which will provide increased employment.

Particular attention has been given by the Government to the promotion of commodity standards, and the Standards Institute set up under the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research is now functioning with the voluntary co-operation of representatives of the various industries. Research associations, representing Government and industry, have also been set up in the Dominion.

Standards Institute.

A policy of price-fixation has been successfully followed in several cases, and under the Board of Trade Act the Minister of Industries and Commerce initiated a scheme for the control and development of the wheat, flour, and bread industries. As a result of this activity an important industry has been saved from the effects of ruthless competition from overseas, a higher measure of efficiency has been attained, and consumer interests have been protected to the fullest extent. The ultimate saving to the Dominion as a result of the scheme runs into many hundreds of thousands of pounds.

Price-fixation.

The Government's policy is the maintenance of existing industries at the highest pitch of efficiency, the encouragement of new industries that can be established with reasonable social advantage, and the best use of our undoubted resources of raw materials that are yet in the primary stages of development.

PUBLIC WORKS.

A reference has already been made to the Government's policy regarding public works as a means of providing full-time useful employment.

The definition of public works is a very wide one, and includes the construction and improvement of and additions to railways; the erection and alteration of post and telegraph buildings, courthouses, and public buildings of various other kinds; construction and improvement of roads and highways; land drainage, irrigation, protection, and land-settlement of various types; extension of telegraph and telephone systems; afforestation; the development of electric supply; development of tourist resorts; and other works of less importance. In addition to public works executed by the Government, a considerable number are carried out by local authorities with or without Government financial assistance, but it is noteworthy that during the past seven or eight years the portion, both absolute and relative, of the cost of public works borne directly by the local ratepayer has diminished very considerably. An analysis of the incidence of the burden of the estimated annual road bill, for example, shows that in 1928-29 the amount provided from local rates was £1,616,000, or 29 per cent. of the total on all except urban roads, while in 1935-36 it was £1,366,000, or 22 per cent. of the total.

Scope of public works.

The Government are of opinion that a substantial measure of planning is a necessary implication of an economic public works policy. Planning has therefore been undertaken first to select the most desirable works having regard to the localities where labour is available, and second to initiate a long-range programme designed to carry out necessary works and to utilize the available supply of skilled and unskilled labour to the greatest advantage.

Planning necessary.

On railway-construction last year the expenditure was £587,000, principally on the Gisborne-Napier extension, the South Island Main Trunk connection, and the Westport to Inangahua length. It will be seen from the Public Works Estimates

Railway-construction.