

Utilization.—The National Committee for the utilization of waste is a voluntary organization sponsored by the Department. Originally this body of workers concentrated on papier mâché work, making hospital and first-aid utensils for E.P.S., Red Cross, and eventually for the Armed Services. Housed in premises procured by the Department, the Committee launched out into new ventures, and in addition to papier mâché work it also undertook the manufacture of utilitarian articles from rags, tins, and other usable waste material.

Interest in this work spread throughout the Dominion, and in response to inquiries from Australia the President, Mrs. F. H. Whatley, during 1943, paid an official visit to the Commonwealth and rendered useful service there in narrating and demonstrating what is being done in New Zealand.

A very valuable work was undertaken by the Committee when it undertook, with the co-operation of the Army authorities, the repair of garments. Last year twenty thousand garments were mended, and as a result of the work done, after meeting all expenses, the sum of £630 was handed over to patriotic funds. Occupational therapy for servicemen in hospital has been fostered by the Committee, which has also provided demonstrators for educational institutions and teachers. Great credit is due to the Committee for the magnificent voluntary service rendered in so many spheres.

INDUSTRIES COMMITTEE (IMPORT CONTROL)

During the year under review the Industries Committee continued its function of assisting the Customs Department in the administration of the Import Control Regulations. Close contact with manufacturers, importers, and the various Controllers was maintained with a view to making adequate provision for the raw materials and manufactured goods essential for our wartime needs and the maintenance of a reasonable standard of living.

In March, 1944, for reasons which are dealt with fully in the report of the Ministry of Supply, the Industries Committee was merged with the Executive Advisory Committee of the Commissioner of Supply. This joint Committee continues to make recommendations to the Customs Department in respect to applications for licenses to import certain classes of commodities.

NEW ZEALAND MANUFACTURERS' FEDERATION AND DISTRICT ASSOCIATIONS

Close contact has been maintained with the New Zealand Manufacturers' Federation and the four constituent associations, and a free exchange of views has occurred on matters affecting the industrial life of the community. The Department extends its appreciation to the executive and administrative officers of the federation and associations for their continued co-operation.

STANDARDS INSTITUTE

The activities of this section of the Department are covered in a separate report.

TOBACCO-GROWING INDUSTRY

Despite war conditions, which have presented special problems, and although the programme of steady expansion envisaged by the Board has necessarily been curtailed, the tobacco-growing industry has maintained production at a high level, a record harvest having been attained during the season under review.

For five successive years the average prices received by growers were 1s. 10½d. per pound for flue-cured and 1s. 7½d. per pound for air-dried leaf.

As a result of a recent application for increased prices made to the Price Tribunal by the New Zealand Tobacco-growers' Federation, after careful investigation an increase of 1d. per pound was granted for leaf of the 1944 harvest. The average prices therefore were fixed by a Price Order issued by the Price Tribunal at 1s. 11½d. per pound for flue-cured and 1s. 8½d. per pound for air-dried leaf.

Grants toward the cost of the upkeep of the Tobacco Research Station have continued, and a live interest has been maintained in the tobacco-research programme, which is based on the maintenance of highest quality, the elimination of pests and disease, and the development of best varieties.

During the past and present seasons the inadequacy of the supply of labour for harvesting purposes threatened to become acute, but by arrangement with the National Service and Army Departments territorials were made available to the growers, thereby facilitating harvesting operations. The assistance thus rendered was greatly appreciated by the tobacco-growers.

From time to time the Board has been able to assist in procuring materials which have been in short supply but which were urgently required in connection with the production of leaf tobacco.

Statistics of Tobacco-growing.—The following table provides comparative figures for the past five seasons :—

| Season. | | | | | Number of Growers. | Acreage licensed. | Production. |
|---------|----|----|----|----|--------------------|-------------------|-------------|
| | | | | | | | lb. |
| 1938-39 | .. | .. | .. | .. | 342 | 2,225 | 1,423,610 |
| 1939-40 | .. | .. | .. | .. | 339 | 2,570 | 2,217,040 |
| 1940-41 | .. | .. | .. | .. | 381 | 2,963 | 3,143,355 |
| 1941-42 | .. | .. | .. | .. | 381 | 3,063 | 2,721,539 |
| 1942-43 | .. | .. | .. | .. | 360 | 2,960 | 3,185,183 |