

"The Australian wheat received, with the exception of 8,482 tons which went to the South Island, was substantially used in the North Island. The North Island poultry industry absorbed 1,743,742 bushels (46,699 tons), this requiring distribution at regular intervals amongst 140 merchants at various ports and places throughout the North Island. Except as above stated, the South Island was supplied wholly from the New Zealand crop.

"The weight of crop produced in New Zealand was 7,208,485 bushels from 233,786 acres, at an average per acre yield of 30.83 bushels. This was the lowest, in all three respects, of any crop since 1939. The price was 6s. 2d. f.o.b. grower's nearest port, equal to 5s. 10d. on trucks or 5s. 8½d. on farm.

"Experience of most trying weather conditions by the growers in the past year has fully demonstrated the worth of the insurance scheme reported last year as established to compensate growers for a material portion of their losses by hail, frost, and flood damage to wheat crops. All of these forms of damage were experienced. The growers paid a premium of ½d. per bushel for the cover. Under the scheme the grower is required to take the first 50 per cent. of the risk.

"The flour-milling industry continued to function satisfactorily in the national interest by meeting all demands. The same number of mills operated as in the previous year, forty-three in all. Throughout this industry, as, indeed, was the case with the wheatgrowing industry and the baking industry, a good measure of co-operation has been experienced. Flour-millers have continued to carry the reserves of wheat built up to meet emergencies and to shoulder the cost of this service.

"The number of bread-baking units on the register at 31st January, 1945, was 567, a reduction of three during the period under review. Of these units, 81 per cent. are 'small' bakers—i.e., manufacturing less than 5,000 two-pound loaves per week. Other relative details are:—

	Per Cent.
"(a) Units manufacturing less than 1,500 .. .. .	126 22
"(b) From 1,500 to 3,000 per week .. .. .	196 35
"(c) From 3,000 to 5,000 per week .. .. .	134 24
"(d) From 5,000 to 10,000 per week .. .. .	64 11
"(e) Over 10,000 two-pound loaves per week .. .. .	47 8

"An important feature of the bread-baking control scheme during the past twelve months concerns the successful inauguration of arrangements for rehabilitating returned servicemen into the baking industry.

"In terms of these arrangements, the authorization of transfer of any bread-baking business has been withheld since 26th June, 1944, pending a notification from the Director of Rehabilitation to the Wheat and Flour Controller that no ex-serviceman is available for such business.

"Since the operation of these arrangements, 17 ex-servicemen have acquired bread-baking businesses, and 2 other returned men have acquired partnership interests in bakery concerns.

"Other similar transactions for the benefit of returned servicemen are in course of negotiation.

"During the period covered by this report, 51 transfers have received the consent of the Hon. the Minister. This number includes the 19 servicemen transactions already alluded to, and embraces 2 other bakeries where agreements exist for the respective businesses to be handed over to sons of recent transferees directly the young men are discharged from the Forces.

"Most difficult conditions have prevailed in the bread-baking industry during the past twelve months with regard to the provision of adequate skilled labour, affecting alike the large automatic units, the mixed bread-pastrycook type of bakery, and the smaller bread-factories. The position has been accentuated by an increased demand for bakers' goods in the majority of districts, and the strain of understaffed bakeries undermining the strength of many aged proprietors.

"Close contact has been maintained with the Controller of Man-power and his District Officers, and I gratefully acknowledge the practical advice and assistance which I have received from these officials with a number of difficult cases referred to them from time to time.

"The representations of master bakers to the district Appeal Boards have been supported by the Controller in all cases where he was satisfied that it was in the public interest to do so.

"Statistical records have been compiled since the operation of the control scheme in 1940 setting out monthly flour deliveries to the several bread-baking units, and for the year ended 31st January, 1945, the quantity of flour delivered to bread-bakers amounted to 1,038,772 sacks (each 200 lb.), as compared with 1,011,200 sacks for the previous year, an increase of 27,572 sacks.

"Allowing for 48,000 sacks per annum used by these units for pastrycook lines, the monthly average flour consumption for bread-baking was 82,564 sacks for the year under review, as compared with 80,266 sacks for the year ending 31st January, 1944. The increase is attributable to the incidence of meat rationing and decreased potato consumption.

"In August, 1944, a meeting of representatives of workers' and employers' organizations was held to consider day baking, but no agreement was reached.

"During the year, questionnaires emanating from the United States of America and Australia were referred to the Wheat Committee dealing with conditions in the Dominion affecting the three allied industries (wheat, flour, and bread)."

#### MOTION-PICTURE INDUSTRY

As indicated in last year's report, activities in this industry have been somewhat less than pre-war years. As is well known, there has been no appreciable improvement in the supply of building materials, and the Building Controller has generally indicated that there can be no further new theatres for a period of at least twelve months. In addition, too, refurbishing and renovating theatres, while in many cases overdue, has been unable to be proceeded with, on account of the general shortage of supplies.