

Consequently, Services' vegetable-production was increased to meet the demand. As the theatre of war moved away from New Zealand and as our own Forces were reduced Services' vegetable requirements underwent further marked changes. The change was one from the production of a wide range of fresh vegetables to a much narrower range of vegetables that could be held and carried in cool storage for several weeks.

At this time commercial growers increased their acreage under vegetables to a very large extent. This, combined with the reduced demand from the Forces, necessitated a partial closing down of S.V.P. By the autumn of 1945 an area of 3,495 acres out of a total of 5,181 acres had been sown down preparatory to handing the land back to the owners. This left an area of 1,686 acres available for cropping during the 1945-46 season.

During the past year vegetables produced by S.V.P. were distributed through the Internal Marketing Division. Some supplies went to United States Forces overseas, some to New Zealand Forces in this country, and some went on to the open market in various parts of the North Island. On account of the overseas United States Forces' demand ceasing suddenly, considerable quantities of vegetables specially grown for them could not be uplifted.

In certain areas—namely, Greytown, Hastings, and Levin—a total area of 153 acres of wheat and barley was grown. This was done because this ground was not required for growing vegetables and because of the great necessity for wheat and barley production. These grain crops were very successful with good yields.

The regrassing of the area of 1,686 acres is to be completed this autumn. It is anticipated that S.V.P. will be finished by the end of September, 1946, by which time all the properties will have been sown down and handed back to the owners. The closing-down of the projects has involved a large amount of organization from both the field and the clerical aspects.

Most of the equipment has been sold by auction and prices have been reasonable on the whole. Buildings, tractors, and motor-vehicles have not been sold by auction, but have been disposed of by the War Assets Realization Board.

COUNCILS OF PRIMARY PRODUCTION

Primary Production Councils were set up as a wartime organization, and with the cessation of hostilities consideration was given to the winding-up of activities, and the Councils and their Committees actually went out of being on 31st March, 1946. During the war this organization played a very real part on the "home front," and the splendid figures of production during this most difficult period can be very largely attributed to its activities. The National Council of Primary Production, the 37 Provincial Councils, and the 272 Production Committees, through the 1,000 active members, greatly assisted the Government through the various Departments of State in effecting a just and equitable distribution in the interests of national production of those farming commodities that were, through force of circumstances, placed under stringent control. Much of this work was of a thankless nature, as, for instance, where decisions required to be made with regard to farm man-power and its relation to the Armed Services, and where the few available items of farm equipment had to be allotted to hundreds of deserving cases, but at no time did the Councils or Committees shirk their responsibilities.

FIELD EXPERIMENTAL WORK.

The activities of the past year have been largely concerned with reorganization and planning for the expected expansion of activities in the coming years. During the war the number of field experiments was reduced from an average of approximately 1,000 to 228 in 1943-44, and while the number of trials open is only 331 at present, the laying-down of new experiments is proceeding as fast as available staff and facilities permit. It is hoped to secure a considerable quantity of equipment which will greatly assist in improving the accuracy and volume of work undertaken in the future.