

Committee, constituted under the Board of Trade (Onion) Regulations 1938, consists of growers' and merchants' representatives and acts in an advisory capacity in matters affecting the production and marketing of the onion crop. Similar functions and representation obtain in regard to the Potato Advisory Committee, set up under the Primary Industries Emergency Regulations 1939. The Commercial Advisory Committee, comprising members of the New Zealand Grain, Seed, and Produce Merchants' Federation, has continued to give valuable assistance in implementing certain controls which are still necessary in connection with the export and import of seeds.

SEED-PRODUCTION

A general increase in the production of grass and clover seeds occurred in the 1946 harvest. Approximately 224,000 acres were devoted to this purpose, as compared with 180,000 acres in 1945 and an average of 135,000 acres for the six immediately preceding seasons.

Except in the case of cocksfoot seed, prices have remained at high levels, due to the keen demand from the United Kingdom for grass and clover seeds generally. During 1946 an embargo had operated against the importation of any cocksfoot seed into that country, with the result that the price of this seed has fallen very sharply. As a similar prohibition has recently been introduced against both certified and uncertified Italian rye-grass and against uncertified perennial rye-grass, and as a restricted importation only of certified perennial rye-grass and crested dogstail is permitted, an appreciable reduction in the prices of these items might be expected in the near future.

The market for both red- and white-clover seeds remains firm at present, but in view of the position in regard to the grass seeds it appears too much to expect that prices for clover seeds will remain long at present levels.

The growing of grass and clover seeds must be regarded as an activity primarily to supply local requirements. Thus, while under certain conditions appreciable exports may take place, it is obvious that the relative instability of the overseas demand, as evidenced by the embargoes referred to, would provide little incentive to seed-growers.

As an industry to meet local requirements, however, with perhaps exports to relieve the market of over-production, the production of small seeds is a vital part of farming practices in this country.

There has been a marked increase in the production of timothy seed, and during 1946 sufficient was harvested to meet local requirements. Multiplication is now taking place of a selected strain of this species, and as a result there should be a marked improvement shortly in the strain quality of timothy seed available.

The production locally under departmental supervision of supplies of turnip, swede, rape, and similar seeds is being continued. The experience being gained in this work emphasizes the necessity of strict control over growing-operations if the market is to be regularly supplied with seed of high quality. A small demand from Australia exists for rape seed, but in general the production of these seeds is for local requirements only.

A good market still exists for peas of all types—garden varieties, food peas, and maple peas. In this commodity the bulk of the crop is exported, and high prices ruled for the produce of the 1946 harvest.

The export of agricultural seeds during 1946 reached a value in New Zealand currency of over £2,750,000. Over half of this value was exported to the United Kingdom, with Australia and the United States also prominent buyers. Other purchasers of seeds valued at over £50,000 in each case were Eire, the Netherlands, Belgium, and Hong Kong.