

RURAL DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

REPORT OF P. W. SMALLFIELD, DIRECTOR

Although difficulties have been encountered in securing all the trained staff required, the Division has carried out a great deal of useful work during the past year. Unfortunately, it has not been possible to fill the positions of Land Utilization Officer, Rural Economist, and Farm Engineer, and until these officers are secured the Division cannot function with full efficiency.

In its work the Division has received assistance from the Fields, Horticulture, and Live-stock Divisions, and a large part of the field-work for the land-utilization and cost-of-production investigations carried out during the year was done by the field officers of other Divisions. The Division's own field-work was chiefly restricted to the Auckland and Canterbury districts.

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF UNITED NATIONS

The Division has been assigned the task of providing and assembling information required by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. During the year reports were prepared on the following subjects: the production, export, import, and local consumption of agricultural seeds, fertilizers, dairy products, cereals, pulses, stock-foods, fats, and oils; controlled marketing in New Zealand (prepared in conjunction with Economic Stabilization Section of Treasury Department); the Dominion's storage capacity for agricultural produce; the extent of food wastage through rodents, insects, and moulds; farm production and nutritional standards; and various minor reports.

The amount of work necessary to supply the information required by FAO will expand greatly during the coming years as the Organization formulates its plans for the improvement of food-production and the raising of nutrition levels.

The Preparatory Commission of FAO, set up to investigate Sir John Boyd Orr's proposals for a World Food Board, has issued its report. Its task was to work out specific proposals for achieving, first, the development and organization of production, distribution, and utilization of basic foods to provide diets on a satisfactory health standard for the peoples of all countries, and secondly, the stabilization of agricultural prices at levels fair to producers and consumers alike.

Briefly, the Commission, while not recommending a World Food Board with authority and funds of its own, does advocate the establishment of a World Food Council consisting of the representatives of eighteen nations and forming an integral part of FAO. The Council would provide machinery such as commodity councils and study groups which would enable nations to act together in matters of food and forestry production.

The Council would also aim at stabilizing prices, building up reserves of food, and using the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development to finance development projects in the under-nourished countries, including, if necessary, the disposal of surplus supplies at special prices.

LAND-UTILIZATION

Sheep-farming.—In conjunction with the Fields and Live-stock Divisions, a review of the progression and regression of the sheep-farming industry in various regions of the Dominion has been carried out. Between 1920 and 1945, total sheep increased from 24,000,000 to 34,000,000, and breeding-ewes from 12,000,000 to 21,000,000. Sheep-farming has shown remarkable progression in the areas devoted to intensive grassland farming, but has either remained stationary or regressed slightly on most areas devoted to extensive pastoral farming. In the Waikato, for instance, 10 acres of grass in 1920 carried only 1 dairy cow and 2 ewes, whereas in 1945, 10 acres of grass carried 4 dairy cows and 6 ewes. In Tauranga County the development of sheep-farming through top-dressing with cobaltized superphosphate has been remarkable; the ewes carried