

in force after the war. These remarks apply also to some extent to oats and barley, the production of which has been below par, also involving dependence on Australian supplies. The acreage under maize increased, but not sufficiently to obviate importation of this grain.

The wealth of the Dominion has been enhanced by substantial increases in sheep and cattle. Such a movement is not only beneficial through direct returns to the stockowner, but owing to the valuable part played by stock in the process of breaking in new country and in pasture-management generally. It is palpable to the observer travelling in many parts of the Dominion that large areas are understocked from this point of view, fern and rubbish steadily gaining ground. Reverted holdings of this sort can only be regarded as a standing reproach to the whole community, as evidence of a faulty rural economy. When the position becomes normal once again the rural labour forces and energies might well be largely directed to "cleaning up" country that has gone back of late years. If such work were accompanied by sound practice as regards grasses and pasture-development generally it should assuredly prove a paying proposition. In a well-organized community such measures should really precede the tackling of further areas of virgin country bush land in particular. In regard to pastures, it is a matter for satisfaction that the subject of our grasslands and their associations is being studied effectively by competent authorities, and the Department of Agriculture may fairly claim to be taking the lead in this respect.

A brief return to the live-stock census is necessary in order to refer to the further regrettable decrease in the number of pigs in the Dominion. Somewhat like wheat-growing in the sphere of arable farming, pig-raising and pork-production has suffered from the greater attention given by farmers to other lines of production yielding easier profits. The general reasoning for a maintenance of sufficient wheat-production may also be applied to a development of our pig-stocks. Moreover, under good management, the pig is a most profitable farm animal, comparing fully in this respect with sheep and cattle, as shown, for instance, by the experience of the United States, Canada, Denmark, &c. It is true that the present trend of the dairy industry from butter-production to the manufacture of cheese, dried milk, casein, and sugar of milk is absorbing much of the by-product formerly available for pig-raising, but this can be counteracted by simple measures of pig-food production on the farm by means of forage-cropping. One would like to see a rally in pig-raising to speedily double the present wholly inadequate stock of a quarter-million head.

Our main primary industries—meat and dairy-produce—have continued to flourish, the factors of stability, security, profit, and last but not least shipping, being provided under the system of purchase by the Imperial Government. The prices received by the producers, although handsome, have all along been most moderate compared with values obtaining on open markets. It is safe to say that the returns from our staple products received from the Imperial authorities have filtered through to the whole community, and have enabled us to pay our way in the war in such a remarkable manner. In connection with the frozen-meat industry beef-production shows a well-maintained expansion as compared with pre-war times. The sheep, however, keeps its easily predominant position in the animal husbandry of the Dominion, the "golden fleece," coupled with mutton and lamb, placing it far ahead of all rivals as a wealth-producer. The dairy industry, however, is expanding steadily in output and value, our cheese export in particular, with an annual production of over 50,000 tons, now bulking really large in international statistics. A feature of the dairy year was a prospective boom in dried-milk or milk-powder manufacture, from which phenomenal returns are figured at present prices. In this connection I deemed it my duty to utter a caution against precipitate action on the part of our co-operative dairy companies involving very large capital expenditure on plant, with expectations based on war-time prices. It would seem wise to allow those few dairy companies which are pioneering the new enterprise with improved drying processes to demonstrate the business by actual experience. In the meantime various by-products of milk afford plenty of scope for further profitable exploitation under the present disposition of the dairy industry.

Fruitgrowing, poultry-farming, beekeeping, and other of our lesser rural industries have given a good account of themselves—this notwithstanding the continued absence of an export outlet for fruit through shortage of shipping-space, and the high prices and scarcity of cereal foods for poultry. The honey-producers have enjoyed phenomenally high prices for their output, according with values on the British market.

The shortage of shipping for transporting our staple products overseas has again been a source of anxiety, and must probably remain so until after the war, largely owing to the vast transatlantic tonnage requirements of our American allies. While heavy shipments were made, the stores were not cleared before the output of the 1917-18 season began to come in, and the accumulations gained steadily in most lines. The position was met in the frozen-meat and dairy industries by a further provision of cold-storage accommodation. The enterprise displayed in this respect by all