

In consequence the Department had deemed it desirable to cable the High Commissioner advising him that inquiries from merchants showed that stocks of turnip and swede seeds were seriously below requirements for 1918 sowing, and that orders for over 200 tons of turnip-seed and 100 tons of swede-seed which had been sent to England had not yet arrived. Sir Thomas Mackenzie was requested to ascertain and advise urgently what proportion of these had been shipped or would be shipped up to the end of July, and further asked to use every effort to secure shipment of all orders for turnip, swede, and rape seeds by the date mentioned.

We therefore decided that it would be necessary to issue a warning to farmers through the Press of the Dominion advising them that there would probably be a shortage of turnip and swede seeds for 1918 sowing, and to make the suggestion that they should reserve a portion of their crop for seed purposes.

So far as rape was concerned, there appeared to be a better supply in store to fulfil the 1918 requirements, but there was every indication that the 1919 supply would have to be largely made up from locally-produced seed.

#### WAIRARAPA FARM SCHOOL.

A proposal from the Wairarapa district to establish a farm where returned soldiers might receive some training in farming matters, which had been referred to us by Cabinet for a report, was very carefully considered. It was mentioned that the farm in question, which had already been secured, had cost nearly £20,000, and was suitable for stud sheep and agricultural farming. The Wairarapa people themselves were giving the farm, which contained 736 acres of land, as well as the stock, and they wished the Government to assist in providing the cost of buildings, equipment, and maintenance. When the time came that the farm was not required for training soldiers the institution could be utilized as a farm school for the sons of settlers for all time. It was suggested that the institution should be under the control and management of a Board of Governors, to be selected by the Government, the donors of the land, and the local agricultural and pastoral associations.

After fully discussing the matter the Board considered that the generous and patriotic offer of the Wairarapa people should be accepted, and that their efforts, which were in keeping with the other good work they had done for the benefit of returned soldiers, should receive all the help that could be given to the movement, and a resolution was forwarded to the Hon. the Acting Prime Minister accordingly. We further considered that the various matters connected with the arrangements for the working of such a farm should be referred to a conference of a Committee of the Council of Education, of the National Efficiency Board, of the Board of Agriculture, and of representatives of the subscribers to the fund, so as to formulate a scheme for the management of this farm, and of other similar farms in various places throughout the Dominion, of which they hoped the Wairarapa farm would be the forerunner.

Accordingly a meeting of these bodies was held. Dr. Reakes and Dr. Anderson (Director of Education) were also present. After an exhaustive discussion it was agreed to inform you that the Board recommended the payment of a subsidy of £9,000, to be utilized in the provision of buildings, dwellings, yards, fencing, implements, horses, library, &c. It was further recommended that the control of the institution be under a Board of Trustees (namely, two from each agricultural and pastoral association concerned), selected locally, to hold office for six years, one to retire at the end of every three years, and two to be nominated by the Government, and that the staff of the farm should consist of a manager (to have a general knowledge of farming and stock, who would also be competent to control the finance of the farm), an agricultural foreman, a dairyman, and a stockman and shepherd.

Dr. Reakes has recently informed us that the necessary conveyance of the property from the donors to the Government has now been completed, the management committee has been selected, and arrangements are in hand for the obtaining of buildings for the farm. It is indeed gratifying to know that matters are well in train in connection with this farm, and there would appear to be nothing now to prevent it from going right ahead, and proving of great value in the training of returned soldiers for settlement on the land.

#### WHEAT QUESTION.

The following resolution was passed and sent on to you :—

“That the Hon. Minister of Agriculture be written to and informed that the Board consider that the prospect of growing sufficient wheat for next season is being very seriously endangered by the uncertainty in farmers' minds that prevails owing to the price to be paid for the crop not having yet been gazetted. Also that the Government be recommended to follow the procedure established by the British Government of guaranteeing to farmers a fair price for a term of years, so as to ensure a sufficient quantity of wheat being grown to meet the requirements of the Dominion.”

The wheat question was discussed very fully with you when you met our Board and the National Efficiency Board in conference in September last, when you detailed the steps taken in connection with the purchase of 4,000,000 bushels of wheat in Australia, and informed us that the price paid for the whole quantity was 5s. 7½d. per bushel, f.o.b.

The conference, after having given the question the fullest consideration, sent you the following joint letter :—

“Wellington, 13th September, 1918.

“At your instigation a conference was held on the 10th and 11th September between the Board of Agriculture and the National Efficiency Board, with a view to determining whether any announcements should be made in respect to the frozen-meat and dairy