

compared with the preceding season. Barley showed a fair increase in area as compared with the previous year's much reduced sowings, but the yield was also affected by adverse weather conditions. Maize for grain, which is essentially a North Island crop, recorded increases in both area and yield. Linseed again increased in area, but yielded less per acre. The same applies to rye-grass seed. Cocksfoot was again less in area, with a per-acre yield of seed much on a par with the preceding year's. Potatoes showed a slight increase in area, but a somewhat lower yield. The areas in turnips and mangolds were again a little lower. After careful consideration, the Government decided not to renew the system of guaranteed prices for wheat which had obtained for several years. It is proposed that the existing duty on wheat shall remain unaltered, but Parliament is being asked to increase the duty on flour. Owing to the decreased local production substantial importations of both wheat and oats will be necessary before next season's harvest. Inquiries indicate that the area sown in wheat in the autumn of the current year is about the same as the total area sown in 1923; further, that preparations are being made by farmers for considerable additional sowings in the ensuing spring. There are thus grounds for hoping that the total wheat area for the 1924-25 season will meet the Dominion's requirements for next year, provided a normal yield is secured. Full self-support as regards essential breadstuffs is very desirable considered from a broad viewpoint.

An improved tone is apparent in the fruitgrowing industry, largely as a result of more successful export operations and better organization of the local market. Shipments of apples to Great Britain in the 1924 season have shown another large increase, and satisfactory average prices have been reported. The Government guarantee of 1d. per pound net return on shipments was renewed this year, but it is hoped that claims will be reduced to a minimum. The results of the 1923 business necessitated substantial assistance to shippers under the guarantee. The principle of legislative control has been endorsed by the fruitgrowing industry generally, and a Bill which has been prepared for that purpose will come before Parliament during the current session.

The outstanding feature in connection with the poultry industry during the year was the successful initiation of an export business in eggs to the British market. Provided quality and other essential factors are maintained, excellent prospects now exist for the maintenance of a regular outlet for our surplus egg-production. Legislation pertaining to the export trade and other related phases of the poultry industry is also in view. During the year importations of fowl-wheat from Australia were authorized, and difficulties connected with feeding thus greatly eased. Commercial egg-production, especially where followed as an independent business, demands aptitude and skill on the part of the poultryman, but it has been amply demonstrated that success can be attained. Poultry-keeping as a well-conducted side-line on general farms is, however, likely to remain the principal source of supply.

The beekeeping industry has progressed steadily during the year, and is overcoming the export marketing difficulties which have handicapped it for some time. A measure of control is contemplated also in connection with the honey trade. Various minor activities connected with horticulture—market-gardening, glasshouse products, &c.—continue to expand, and form in the aggregate a large volume of rural or semi-rural industry. This production is almost entirely for the local market; but supply of the food requirements of, say, a million consumers is no small affair, and such business will continue to steadily increase in importance with the growth of the Dominion's population. The latter consideration, of course, also applies to other food products such as meat and dairy-produce, cereals, and so forth.

A distinct revival has appeared to mark the hemp (phormium-fibre) industry during the year. Disease affecting the plant-leaf has largely disappeared, the output has increased substantially from its recent low-water mark, and the market has shown steadiness at reasonably remunerative prices. Improved methods of cutting the leaf promise to further advance the industry, and it is to be hoped that careful milling practice will also receive more general attention.

Boards of control are now taking an important part in connection with our primary industries. An event of the year was the enactment of the Dairy-produce