

5. A decrease of 239,633 bales in the quantity and £6,959,665 in the declared value of the wool exported.

6. A decrease of 23 per cent. in the estimated acreage and a prospective substantial decrease of approximately 5 bushels an acre in the yield of the wheat crop, resulting in a prospective crop of approximately 6,500,000 bushels of wheat grown in the 1934-35 season, in comparison with an ascertained yield of slightly over 9,000,000 bushels in the 1933-34 season. The evidence at present available suggests that the local wheat crop may be insufficient to meet local requirements.

7. Little change in the acreage but decreases in the yield per acre of oats, barley, and potatoes.

8. An appreciable increase in the amount of phosphatic fertilizer and of lime used.

That the position in respect to farm-production has been so satisfactory despite adverse circumstances may be attributed partly to the fact that the improvement in the standard of efficiency in our farming which has been in evidence over a period of years has been maintained even though the effect of this on production has been masked to some extent by the unfavourable weather experienced during the year; it also may be attributed partly to the fact that various long-range projects, such as systematic improvement of stock and crops have now reached the stage when their beneficial results are being reflected more freely in production.

TREND TOWARDS INCREASED EFFICIENCY.

In last year's report certain trends towards increased efficiency which were then evident were discussed, and it is satisfactory to note that these trends continued to be apparent during the year now under review.

Among the matters indicative of endeavour likely to bring about greater efficiency is the wide attention given to the use of certified seed. While there was a decrease in the areas of wheat and of perennial rye-grass harvested for the production of certified seed, it is to be noted both that this decrease was due primarily to the unfavourable season and that it was relatively small. On the other hand, there were substantial increases in the areas harvested for certified seed in the case of potatoes, white clover, red clover, and cocksfoot, and, while exact information is not available, it seems certain that all these increases affect for the present not so much the export trade in seeds as the use of improved seed within the Dominion.

A trend which generally will bring about lowered costs of production, which was noted last year and which has continued, is that towards increased use of phosphatic fertilizers. In fact, the fertilizer-consumption for the year attains record proportions. Up to the end of March the increase was confined wholly to the North Island, a slight decrease being recorded in the South Island; but this decrease easily could be changed subsequently into an increase when the manuring of cereal crops was taken into account.

The increase in pig-meat production as an auxiliary to butterfat-production which was forecast last year has been fully realized, and a further substantial increase seems imminent provided the current widespread interest in improved pig husbandry is maintained and reflected in practice. The data available point to the conclusion that the Dominion's production of carcasses of porker weights now makes available for export a supply which approximates that which can be disposed of satisfactorily overseas, and, this being so, further expansion should be in the production of carcasses of baconer weights. Such a development probably would call for important adjustments in our pig-keeping, and about these adjustments that desirable type of knowledge which is based on thoroughly examined farm practice is not freely available. Hence there is urgent need for further investigation relative to several matters bearing on economic pig-production under the circumstances which seem likely to develop. This is being undertaken by the Divisions of this Department directly concerned. The following three problems are of outstanding importance: (1) The general production of pigs which provide the type of carcass suited to the needs of the prospective markets; (2) the association of good type of carcass with economical conversion of feeds into flesh—investigations already have established that there are strain variations in pigs in this respect analogous to the strain variations in dairy cows in their ability to utilize the feed provided; (3) the economical provision of feed to supplement dairy by-products when the supply of these is inadequate—this introduces crop-production and pasture-utilization problems which are being investigated by the Department. Work already done indicates clearly that a matter most acutely in need of improvement is the feeding, especially that of breeding-animals during the period when dairy by-products are in scant supply. Until this, in conjunction with the general care of the stock, is made reasonably efficient, the considerable potential benefits from improvement of the class of pigs kept cannot be satisfactorily realized.