

WOOL FOR THE WORLD

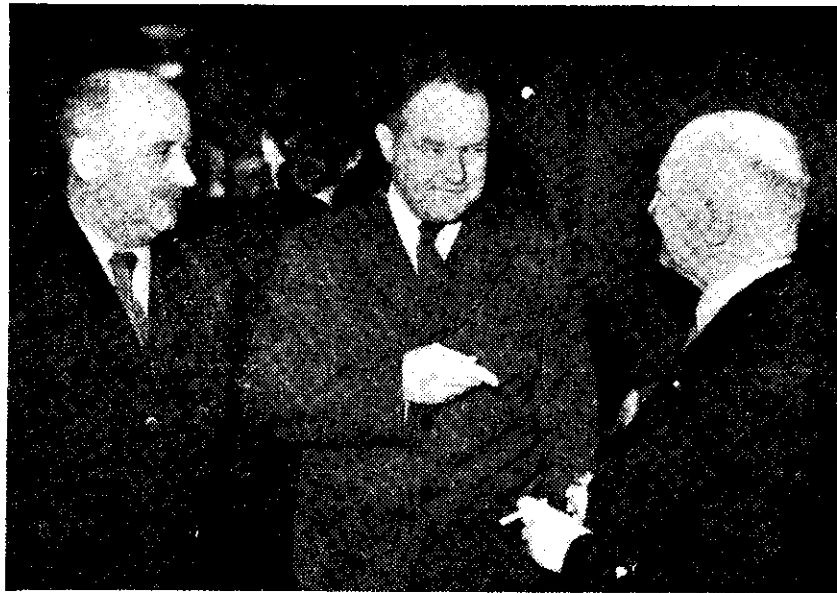
International Secretariat Chairman
Visits New Zealand

A LISTENER staff reporter who interviewed Dr. Edgar Booth the other day felt fortified in his winter woollens. For Dr. Booth, Australian representative on the International Wool Secretariat, and its chairman, is sometimes called the "world wool ambassador." And half-an-hour with him

it will be a long time before saturation is reached."

"What about the synthetic substitutes?"

"Some danger lies in the possibility of an increase in the production of artificial yarns from which fabrics can be made, and with which the public may be compelled to satisfy themselves—though satisfy is certainly not the right word—till they can get the woollen materials.



DR. EDGAR BOOTH (centre) talks to French wool trade delegates at a recent meeting in London

will convince anybody that the wool business, from the fleece on the hoof to the shopman's query, "What size socks, sir?" is his whole interest in life. He was here as the guest of the New Zealand Wool Board, to meet representatives of the industry, and to give first-hand information about overseas wool developments. He has recently been in Holland, Czechoslovakia, South Africa and the United States.

We asked him to tell us about the industry in Europe.

"The demand for wool there is abnormal," he said. "Everyone is anxious to buy all the woollen garments possible, to build up depleted and non-existent wardrobes. And the demand continues aggressively."

"How long," we asked, "will it be before production and supply are back to normal?"

"Several years. You see, even in the countries which were not our enemies,

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buy a painting a year. That alone would save a number of artists from the choice between poverty and uncongenial work. But even good paintings on the wall will not have the effect upon ourselves or on our culture as a people that Public Design could have. The true measure of our sensuous maturity shows itself in less conscious artifacts—in chocolate boxes and dress material, in the figures on the tote, and the stamps on the envelope. It is at this end that our designers should begin.

But the Secretariat is not indulging in what is sometimes popularly alluded to as the 'battle of the fibres.' It is not concerned with any publicity campaign against any other fibre, synthetic or natural. It recognises the value of a large range of materials with qualifications in certain classifications."

The Secretariat was certainly concerned with the responsibility of maintaining and developing the position of wool in the world's markets, said Dr. Booth. "But we must not overlook substitutes if the price of wool goes to uneconomic heights. There is really no substitute for wool, and manufacturers of synthetic fibres do not claim that they are producing a substitute, for wool stands completely in a class of its own."

"When are the Continental mills likely to get back to full working order?"

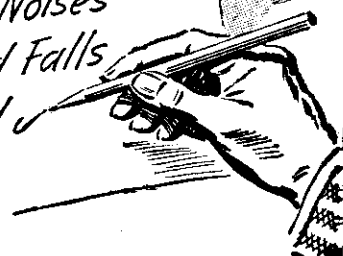
"Fortunately they are, in most cases, in better condition than was expected. In Germany conditions are not so good, but we hope that, in a fairly short time, a considerable amount of the equipment that is still intact will be in operation."

The mills would help to relieve the world shortage which was specially acute in worsted tops and yarns. In Czechoslovakia mills having more than 400 employees had been nationalised, and the country was now an important manufacturing centre. And the French mills were turning out 75 per cent. of their pre-war quantities, he added.

(Dr. Booth was heard in a recent Sunday night talk on the main National stations.)

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