

1944  
NEW ZEALAND

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# DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRIES AND COMMERCE

(TWENTY-SEVENTH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE)

*Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency*

YOUR EXCELLENCY,—

Wellington, 20th July, 1944.

I have the honour to submit for your Excellency's information the report of the Department of Industries and Commerce for the past year.

I have, &c.,

D. G. SULLIVAN,

Minister of Industries and Commerce.

His Excellency the Governor-General of the Dominion of New Zealand.

SIR,—

Wellington, 22nd June, 1944.

I have the honour to submit the annual report of the Department of Industries and Commerce. This report deals with the work of the Department since the previous report was placed before Parliament, and covers the period ended 31st March, 1944.

I have, &c.,

L. J. SCHMITT, Secretary.

The Hon. D. G. Sullivan, Minister of Industries and Commerce.

## PRICE CONTROL

THE activities of the Price Tribunal in the control of the prices of goods and services, which were commenced in September, 1939, have been intensified. The number of officers and inspectors has had to be increased to cope with the greatly increased volume of work which has resulted from the activities referred to below. The control of the prices of many commodities has been consolidated by the issuing of a further 89 price orders, which brings the total number issued to 216.

On the 12th January, 1944, Amendment No. 4 of the Control of Prices Emergency Regulations 1939 came into force. This amendment is designed generally to strengthen the Tribunal's control of prices. By it the powers of a local authority entitled by any Act to fix or approve the prices charged by other persons become subservient to the powers of the Tribunal. The authority of the Tribunal to "declare" goods and prohibit their sale pending the fixation of approved prices is extended to apply not only generally, but to any particular person or goods. In addition, the amendment contains clauses designed to simplify procedure.

Reference was made in the last annual report to the power given to the Tribunal to prohibit the sale of declared classes of goods unless approved prices had been obtained. This power has been exercised in respect of most lines of clothing for men, women, boys, and girls, footwear, knitting-wools, blankets, mattresses and pillows, cotton and linen piece-goods, stationery, watches, and furniture. The declaring of the wide range of goods involved a great increase in the volume of investigational work required, and a consequent increase in the number of officers required to check the costs.

A recent Price Order requires retailers of vegetables and fruit to place tickets on their goods showing the retail prices. This method of informing the public of approved prices is being adopted in all appropriate cases.

The Tribunal has continued to co-operate fully with the Standards Institute in formulating standards for various commodities, in order that more effective control may be maintained over not only the prices of commodities, but their values as well.

The increase in the staff of inspectors has resulted in a more effective policing of the regulations, and to date Court proceedings have been taken in 1,116 cases, resulting in 1,104 convictions and 12 dismissals. The total fines imposed amounted to £5,115.