

Wheat Campaign.—A vigorous campaign for the sowing of wheat in 1943 was conducted by the Wheat Committee. The area sown (249,000 acres) fell far short of the target, but this was largely due to the fact that practically no spring sowing was possible because of weather conditions.

Wheat-price.—The wheat-price was lifted from 5s. 9d. f.o.b. (where it had rested since 1938) to 6s. 2d. for the 1943 harvest.

Flour-mills.—There is probably no other industry in the Dominion which can compare with the record of the flour-milling industry, in that during the war this industry has not only absorbed all increased costs (except cost of sacks and small bags, which are equalized out of War Expenses Account), but for the year 1943 it repaid to the Wheat Committee the sum of 10s. per ton on all wheatmeal manufactured—£5,525 on 11,050 tons of meal.

There are forty-three mills operating. The millers have assisted the Wheat Committee by carrying reserve stocks of wheat at no cost to the Committee, although at considerable cost to themselves, and this is appreciated as a national war effort on their part.

MOTION-PICTURE INDUSTRY

Activities in connection with the motion-picture industry have been somewhat less than usual over the past year. Due to building difficulties and problems associated with furnishings, no new theatres have been opened in the country.

One or two problems have arisen in connection with the falling-in of leases of theatres, and discussions have taken place between the Department and the landlords concerned. Fortunately, we were able to negotiate satisfactory settlement in all cases.

Applications for new theatres have been very few, and the usual procedure has been followed of referring the report to the Magistrate for his recommendation to the Hon. Minister. In all cases during the year the applications have been declined on account of the fact that there were sufficient facilities available in the particular locality.

The Film Industry Board's activities have been restricted by virtue of the delay that ensued with the election of independent representatives to the Board, but the election has just concluded, and it is anticipated the Board will be meeting at an early date.

One difficult investigation dealt with during the year was that concerning the supply of adequate film of a reasonable exhibition value to one of the theatres in the Auckland province. The licensee petitioned Parliament in respect of the matter, and the Department gave evidence at the hearing before the Industries and Commerce Committee of the House. As a result of the finding, the Department is now engaged on the question of the preparation of a suitable order of reference to examine the distribution of film, and this will be a matter to be undertaken during the coming year.

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