

Barley.—Because of delay in spring sowing, many barley crops suffered from the effects of dry weather and, though yields were good from early spring-sown crops, the bulk of the crops sown would yield less than usual. However, the lower yield will be compensated by the increased area sown.

Potatoes.—The area planted in potatoes will be much the same as in the previous season, but generally, due to the dry season, yields in the main crop areas will be lower. Early crops in most parts of the North Island, on the other hand, yielded remarkably well and there was difficulty in disposing of some of the crops, especially in view of the larger acreage planted in Hawke's Bay and Poverty Bay.

Onions.—Though the season was favourable to the onion crop in some districts, dry conditions in others reduced the yield. In general, crops were harvested under good conditions and the quality is satisfactory.

Peas.—The acreage sown to peas was again high, but many crops were sown late in November and yields suffered because of the dry weather. Yields varied considerably, but will be generally below normal.

Maize.—The early part of the season suited maize crops particularly well, though damage by cutworm after germination necessitated the resowing of several hundred acres in the Gisborne district, which will cause a reduction in the over-all yield.

Linseed and Linen Flax.—Both these crops suffered appreciably from dry weather and attacks from rust during summer, except in Otago and Southland, where good yields were obtained in the coastal districts.

CROP ADVISORY COMMITTEES

During the year the Barley Advisory Committee, the Onion Marketing Advisory Committee, and the Potato Advisory Committee continued to function and gave material assistance to both the Department and growers of the crops. The Commercial Advisory Committee also continued to give valuable assistance in implementing controls which are still necessary in connection with the export and import of seeds. A new Committee set up during the year, the Small Seeds Advisory Committee, gives advice on seed-production.

SEED-PRODUCTION

During the period under review import restrictions were extended by the British Government to apply to practically all grass and clover seeds normally bought from New Zealand. These restrictions, with the exception of that affecting cocksfoot, were not introduced until the 1947 harvest was well in hand and, as a result, had no effect on the production of seed during that harvest. In the case of cocksfoot, restrictions on which were introduced during 1946, production diminished by about 40 per cent. In other lines of seeds, production was either maintained at the 1946 level or increased, and the British import embargoes brought about a sudden and very marked fall in prices for all seeds affected. However, inquiries from the Continent of Europe enabled a market at lower prices to be found for most of the 1947 crop, with the result that the predicted surplus of seed, in general, did not eventuate.

Crop seeds are being produced almost entirely for use in New Zealand and supplies are being maintained at a satisfactory level. Peas remain in good demand, and over-all arrangements with the United Kingdom are absorbing the total exportable surplus of all field peas.

Contract Growing of Seeds.—Several hundred acres of various types of seeds are being grown annually under contract to the Department as a means of multiplying to a commercial stage the nucleus lots of selected pasture and crop seeds raised by the Departments of Agriculture and Scientific and Industrial Research. The seed produced