

Licences authorized will permit the import from the sterling area during 1950 of tractors and farm implements to a total value of £4 million. In addition, \$12·8 million have been allocated for imports of American agricultural and industrial tractors, and other specialized farm equipment.

In May, 1950, the trading banks were given freedom to make any advances agreed with their customers for the purchase by farmers of live-stock, farm machinery, vehicles, and implements.

Obtaining labour for farm work is still an acute problem, but it is hoped that some assistance will come through the Government's rural housing and expanded immigration schemes.

Wheat

Though the area in wheat had risen to almost 300,000 acres during the war it declined rapidly after 1942-43, and last season reached the low figure of 130,000 acres. To arrest further decline and to stimulate production of this important item to a reasonable figure the Government decided in March last to offer an incentive price for the following (1950-51) season of 9s. 9d. a bushel f.o.r., an effective average increase of 1s. 5d. on the 1949-50 price of 8s. 9d. f.o.b. The change to a free-on-rail basis was designed to encourage production in the back country. It is gratifying to record that there was an immediate response by wheatgrowers, and preliminary estimates of the 1950 sowings point to a considerable increase over the area sown the previous season. The new price has since been extended to the 1951-52 season.

Manufacturing Industries

It is a source of great satisfaction to record that our manufacturing industries continue to make steady progress in producing, in the great majority of cases, goods that compare favourably with those of other countries.

The Government will continue to give practical support to efficient manufacturing and processing industries and will protect them from unfair competition or practices such as dumping or other devices. The importance of efficient manufacturing industries is recognized, and they will continue to receive full consideration in any future tariff revisions. In selecting the items to be exempted from import control the opportunity was taken to free from import restrictions a wide range of industrial raw materials which are obtainable only from overseas.