

seasons had operated in no small measure to discourage wheat-growing. Although the wheat acreage showed considerable reduction, the greatly increased average yield nearly compensated for that shrinkage. The wheat crop was again controlled officially—on similar lines to the previous year's scheme—reasonable prices being fixed and paid by the Government. In connection with the general question of the wheat-supply and price of bread, the price of flour has been stabilized by moderate support from the Consolidated Fund. Oats, barley, and maize showed a substantially increased production compared with the previous year. Other crops, consisting mainly of roots and fodders for the direct feeding of live-stock, do not call for any special comment here beyond remarking that rape and turnips have been somewhat disappointing in the important fattening district of Canterbury.

Referring to the live-stock position, a very large increase in the 1918 returns brought the sheep-stock of the Dominion to a record figure, but this has been discounted by a heavy fall revealed in the 1919 returns. The factors influencing the decrease may be stated as a reduction in breeding-ewes, a smaller lambing percentage, losses due to the abnormal snowfalls, and increased killings of freezing-stock after 30th April, 1918, which, but for a late season, would have been sent to the works prior to that date, and thus not have appeared in the 1918 returns. However, the flocks are still at a higher level than in any previous year except 1918. Cattle, including the dairy classes, have registered a satisfactory increase. It is regretted, however, to have to record another decrease in swine. Special steps are being taken by the Department to counteract this downward movement by providing instructional and demonstrational facilities to farmers in pig feeding and management on up-to-date lines suited to the altering conditions in the Dominion in relation to dairy by-products, &c.

The animal industries of the Dominion responsible for our great staples of wool, meat, and dairy-produce, together with the important by-products, such as skins, hides, tallow, &c., have enjoyed continued prosperity, although the late make of butter and cheese was curtailed by dry conditions. With the approval of the great majority of producers the Imperial purchase of the export output of these staples was extended to cover the period ending 30th June, 1920. In view of the unsettled conditions prevailing at the close of the war, and which will probably continue for some time to come, this was undoubtedly a wise course to adopt on the part of the producers, while it also co-ordinated with the plans of the food authorities in Britain. The prices for meat and wool remained unchanged, but considerably increased prices were accorded for butter and cheese. Our farmers, especially the wool and meat growers, may be fairly said to have shown very great moderation in regard to the disposal of their produce under the extended contracts.

Although new orchard plantings have been considerably restricted owing to war conditions, the fruitgrowing industry has continued to expand steadily, the local market still proving its capacity to absorb the output. In view of the extent of young orchards coming into production each year, it is hoped, however, that the shipping position will quickly allow of a resumption of export. Poultry-keeping has enjoyed a large measure of success, the industry having adapted itself to the comparatively high prices of cereal foods, and demand being usually ahead of the supply as regards eggs and table poultry. The honey-market has experienced a considerable fall from the extreme values reached in the previous year, but remains at a remunerative level, and the beekeeping industry has every prospect of a maintenance of prosperity. With regard to market-gardening and *petite culture* generally, the steadily increasing urban population of the Dominion affords a market which has frequently given evidence of undersupply. The possibilities of tobacco-growing are receiving attention.

The flax-milling (phormium) industry shows some shrinkage in output, due to several adverse factors, such as fall in price, diseased leaf in some districts, and congested storage. With improvement in conditions, however, great activity is promised. The chief handicap the industry now labours under is the extremely high rates of ocean freight ruling for flax and tow.

Shipping and storage have continued to be an element of uncertainty and anxiety for those industries depending upon refrigeration, and further provision of cold storage has been necessary. Financial assistance has been given in this connection. Satisfactory clearances of butter and heavy reductions of cheese were