

AN ECONOMIC SURVEY OF THE POULTRY INDUSTRY IN NEW ZEALAND.

SUGGESTIONS FOR STABILIZATION.

ACTING under instructions from the Hon. G. W. Forbes, Minister of Agriculture, a comprehensive survey of the conditions surrounding the poultry industry has recently been carried out by the Farm Economics Section of the Department of Agriculture, under Mr. E. J. Fawcett, Farm Economist, and was published in report form at the end of last month. The necessity for such a survey arose owing to the unsatisfactory position of our egg-producers in the 1928-29 season. It was recognized that unless some reform could be brought about producers engaged in the industry must always be liable to the cyclic movement of depression and comparative prosperity which has characterized egg-production during the last twelve years.

The survey analyses the present position fully, covering organization of producers, markets, export, production costs, distribution of poultry stocks, production and consumption within New Zealand, and the importance of the industry to the country. Certain conclusions are arrived at, and suggestions made which are calculated to stabilize production either for local requirements or for export purposes. The following extracts from the concluding part of the survey are reprinted for the information of *Journal* readers :—

Conclusions.

(1) The poultry industry is of considerable importance in the economic life of New Zealand :—

(a) The products are a necessity in the family menu and rank very highly in food value.

(b) Eggs represent a considerable item of expense in the household budget where they have to be purchased.

(c) Poultry can be housed in a confined space, and are therefore kept by approximately 50 per cent. of the householders of the Dominion. In the majority of cases fowls are run primarily to supply the family, and, as scraps constitute the major portion of the feed of small flocks, eggs are produced at a minimum cost.

(d) The surplus eggs from side-line and back-yard flocks combined with the output from specialized and semispecialized farms represent a valuable article of commerce.

(e) Poultry flocks and plant represents a large capital outlay.

(f) Approximately 2,000,000 bushels of wheat, besides large quantities of other grain, pollard, bran, &c., are consumed annually by the poultry of New Zealand, and this has a very important bearing on the wheat-growing industry. The poultry industry affords an outlet for the bulk of the 25 per cent. of the total wheat crops which is classed as other than milling quality, and if this outlet were not available the position of wheat-farmers would be immediately affected.

(g) As a side-line to fruit-farming, dairying, and other small-farm enterprises, poultry contributes largely to the net income.

(2) The industry is difficult to organize because—

(a) It is carried on by a large number of people who use city markets as an outlet for their surplus production.