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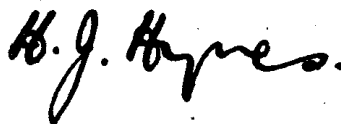
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*Editorial.***CAN FRUIT PLANTINGS BE INCREASED?**

A significant development this year has been the commencement of an overall survey of the principal agricultural industries of Australia with a view to determining the extent to which production might be increased or decreased, having regard both to productive capacity and long-term market prospects. The investigations are centralised in the Commonwealth Bureau of Agricultural Economics but in discussions and formulation of reports there is, as there must inevitably be, close collaboration between the Federal and State Departments and with representatives of industry. The fact that returned servicemen in great numbers are looking to agriculture as a means of livelihood gives added point to the survey, from which in the end there should emerge a fairly clear and detailed pattern of the limits to which our several primary industries might safely be developed. There will thus be available authoritative opinion, based on careful analysis of the position in each case, to guide the agricultural administrator on the one hand and the farmer or intending farmer on the other. Already a full report has been presented on the fruit industries—the first attempted—and the Agricultural Council has agreed that a total of 28,750 acres of new fruit and vine lands may be planted by ex-servicemen without undue risk of overburdening the market. This acreage does not include areas that might be planted by growers outside the War Service Land Settlement Scheme, or areas planted as replacements. The New South Wales share of the total is 7,050 acres, comprising citrus 2,500, wine grapes 900, peaches 1,000, prunes 200, plums 100, apples 500, pears 100, apricots 250 and dried vine fruits 1,500.

In the case of bananas, a recent conference at Brisbane of Commonwealth and State officials and industry representatives declared that the potential market for bananas in Australia will be adequately supplied from plantings already made and arranged, and considered that until some improvement in marketing and distribution could be effected (e.g., ripening rooms in suitable centres) further plantings would not be justified either for civilians or ex-servicemen. It is estimated that in 1946-47 the total acreage in bearing bananas will run to the high level of 27,436 from which the production should lie between 2,881,000 and 3,292,000 bushels. Pre-war Australian consumption of bananas averaged 2,563,000 bushels annually; this has since increased, but even so it is apparent that there will be considerable surplus production over estimated market capacity in the next year or so. There is practically no scope for export of bananas, the fresh fruit market being the only avenue of disposal. Hence the need for warning against further expansion in Australia—as also in Pacific Islands which might look to our market for disposal of their bananas.



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