

1899.
NEW ZEALAND.

DANTHONIA AND CHEWING'S FESCUE GRASSES

(EXPERIMENTS OF AGRICULTURAL DEPARTMENT IN CULTIVATING).

Return to an Order of the House of Representatives dated the 26th September, 1899.

Ordered, "That there be prepared by the Agricultural Department, and laid before this House, a report on the result of the experiments being carried on by the department in cultivating *Danthonia* and Chewing's fescue grasses."—(Mr. McLEAN.)

CHEWING'S FESCUE AND DANTHONIA SEMIANNULARIS FOR THE POOR LANDS OF THE WAIKATO.

A CONSIDERABLE number of varieties of grasses were experimented with at Woodstock, Okoroire. Chewing's fescue and *Danthonia semiannularis* were, however, the only grasses which proved a real success. Other indigenous species are being tested, but it is too early to form any opinion as to their adaptability to this particular work. That the above named have proved their value is amply demonstrated by the following extract from the report of Mr. Clifton, the departmental officer in charge of the Auckland District :—

"Fescue Paddock at Woodstock, Okoroire.—This six-year-old Chewing's fescue paddock of 70 acres is about the only real pasture on this light class of land that can be found throughout the whole of the Waikato, and its carrying-capacity is unequalled. The stocking has been as follows : October to December, 1897, 100 sheep ; December, 1897, to July, 1898, 170 sheep ; July, 1898, to December, 1898, 210 ewes (these lambed in the paddock—85 per cent. of lambs) ; December, 1898, to April, 1899, 150 sheep. All these sheep improved, and were sold off in good condition. It is now intended to stock with cattle. Any comment on the value of such a grass for such soil is needless ; but of the persons interested in improving the stock-carrying capacity of large properties in this province, there are, curiously, few who care even to look at the paddock, and none seem to care to sow more than a few pounds per acre : they appear to prefer to follow the well-established ever-recurring course of turnips, fading grass, and luxuriant manuka.

"Of the grasses that were grown at Woodstock, next to Chewing's fescue comes the indigenous grass *Danthonia semiannularis*. It probably does not afford the same nutrition as the former, but it takes its place on even poorer soil. This grass is appearing on large areas from which the imported grasses have entirely disappeared, and, now that attention has been directed to it, considerable interest is being manifested in encouraging the native grasses of New Zealand."

Department of Agriculture, Wellington, 16th October, 1899.

Approximate Cost of Paper.—Preparation, not given ; printing (1,325 copies), 18s. 6d.

By Authority : JOHN MACKAY, Government Printer, Wellington.—1899.

Price 3d.]