

A mild winter was followed by a dry cold spring, and the summer has been very broken with many windy spells. A heavy snowstorm was experienced at the commencement of lambing, which greatly reduced lambing percentages throughout the province. Although stock wintered well, the changeable spring and early summer weather had the effect of keeping lambs back, and it has been a slow fattening season. However, given favourable weather in the autumn, the returns from fat lambs should be satisfactory.

Owing to shortage of labour, only a small amount of development work has been carried out on Papanui Settlement during the year. The ewe flock has been considerably increased, and a record number of cattle were carried through the summer.

On the Arelif Block the development work consists of the grassing of large areas previously eaten out and overrun with brown-top and couch.

Control: Commissioner of Crown Lands, Invercargill.—The Spurhead Block, of 2,213 acres, and the Anderson Gift Block, of 600 acres, both subject to the Small Farms Act, are under the control of the Commissioner of Crown Lands, Invercargill.

On the whole the past season has been a favourable one, although a wet spring delayed sowings, particularly wheat, swedes, and turnips. All classes of crops and stock have done well.

On the Spurhead Block the outstanding feature of the year's operations was the sowing of 386 acres of linen flax as a direct war effort. This large undertaking turned out more successful than was anticipated, and it appears that very little, if any, of the crop will be rejected for fibre.

The Anderson Block, donated by the late Sir Robert Anderson to the Crown, is situated five miles west of Dipton. Possession was taken on the 16th April, 1942, when the block was immediately stocked up, 1,157 breeding-ewes being wintered. The development of this block can be regarded as advanced, but it is obvious from experience to date that further drainage is essential.

Individual Tenants under the Small Farms Act.

The greater majority of the individual tenants established under the Small Farms Act, 1932–33, are located in the North Auckland and Auckland Land Districts and occupy self-supporting dairy units. The following particulars are supplied relative to these areas:—

North Auckland.—The serious drought conditions have again proved the soundness of the past policy of reticulation of the majority of the properties with adequate piping and troughs. Further maintenance and improvement work has had to be carried out to two large water schemes in the Dargaville district. The holdings served by the two schemes concerned are particularly susceptible to drought conditions and lack of water.

The rationing of manure is also beginning to affect production and also the maintenance of pasture. Wherever possible, however, lime is being applied in larger quantities. The shortage of manure, coupled with the scarcity of labour, has meant that the bringing-in of further areas on some of the farms will have to be delayed until circumstances improve.

The majority of the holdings, however, have sufficient areas developed thereon to allow the holding concerned to be farmed as an economic unit in the meantime.

Numbers of settlers are with the armed forces, but, generally speaking, the settler's family has been able to carry on with the assistance of such outside labour as may be available.

Auckland.—Up till the present time the effect of the top-dressing manure shortage has not been very apparent, but from now on a deterioration must take place. A good rainfall was experienced until the beginning of January, which was very dry and caused pastures to dry up somewhat, but rains in the latter part of February have brought an improvement, and the stock should face the winter well.

Settlers generally have been alive to the necessity for growing crops and saving hay, and for destroying ragwort, which is again becoming a menace, as no sodium chlorate is available, and there is no extra labour available for cutting the weed.

Speaking generally, the settlers have maintained their position, in spite of the special difficulties facing the farming community to-day, but it appears inevitable that progress will be slower until conditions are normal again.

ADVANCES MADE TO CROWN TENANTS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT AND STOCKING OF THEIR HOLDINGS.

Amounts advanced for the year ended 31st March, 1943:—

	£
Improvements	2,303
Stock	701
Number of advances made	39

DISCHARGED SOLDIERS SETTLEMENT ACT, 1915.

The following particulars are supplied pursuant to section 14 of the Discharged Soldiers Settlement Act, 1915:—

TOTAL AREA PROCLAIMED SINCE INCEPTION OF THE SCHEME.

Class of Land.	Area (Acres).
Ordinary Crown lands	1,048,361
Land for settlements land	405,952
Cheviot Estate land	3,356
	1,457,669

Proclamations have been issued revoking the setting-apart of 257,936 acres of Crown land and 108,409 acres of land for settlements land.

From the inception of the soldier-settlement scheme in 1915 the total applications received number 15,181 and the allotments made number 4,112, covering a total area of 1,446,067 acres.

The Discharged Soldiers Settlement Account was abolished by section 6 of the Finance Act, 1937.

Provision for the settlement of discharged servicemen returned from the present war was made in the Small Farms Amendment Act, 1940.