

WESTLAND.

(B. KING, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

The past farming season has been characterized by protracted periods of mild weather accompanied by exceptionally heavy rainfall. As a result, pastures have produced a heavy growth of lush vegetation and stock have kept in good condition throughout, though butterfat-production has suffered in quantity.

Lambing percentages have been good and losses small, fat-stock prices have been maintained, and the farming community must be accounted as having had a good year.

The chief drawback to the season has been occasioned by the exceptional number of floods, which have caused widespread damage to the farming-lands on river-flats, which are characteristic of this district. Many streams have opened up new channels and renewed old channels which have not carried water for many years.

The lessening of returns from pastoral-run country occasioned by the spread of deer and goats continues. Before long this menace will become an acute problem, particularly for South Westland settlers.

CANTERBURY.

(N. C. KENSINGTON, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

The past year can be regarded as a good average year in this district as far as prices and returns are concerned. There have, as usual, been minor difficulties encountered in the different parts, but no serious setbacks have been reported.

The ordinary Crown lands administered in this district comprise largely pastoral areas, and although on some small grazing-runs a certain amount of cultivation is undertaken for winter feeding, there is little commercial cropping, this phase of farming being largely carried out on the numerous areas purchased under the Land for Settlements Act. The runholder and the pastoralist generally have experienced a good year, although in some cases the wool-clip has been lighter. No serious snow losses have taken place and there has been a good average lambing. The question of keeping rabbits under check is one that is causing anxiety, as in some parts an increase has been reported.

The lessees on settlement lands have enjoyed a good average year so far as prices and yields are concerned, with the exception of small seeds. These, together with grass seeds, are not in demand, and revenue from this source will be restricted. Good average wheat yields have been reported, and at the prices obtained should show good margins of profit. Lambing has been good, but delay in fattening has been experienced on account of the prolific growth of pasture. North-west winds have had a drying effect on the light Mid-Canterbury lands and rape has been ripening early, but the root crops give promise of a good supply of winter feed.

The harvesting weather has been somewhat broken, which has delayed operations, but generally has been satisfactory.

OTAGO.

(W. E. SHAW, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

Taken as a whole, the year has been a favourable one. The winter was mild and no unusually heavy snowfalls were experienced on the high country, while the lower country was hardly affected. Unfortunately, late snows on the high country were against good lambing percentages, and a later fall at shearing-time caused losses, but in some ways this proved a blessing in disguise, as the hill-country pastures have since shown to better advantage than for many years. Stock prices have been satisfactory. On the high country the wool-clip generally has been lighter than usual owing to the very dry early spring, while the fine-wool grower has received a somewhat better return than last season.

The cereal crops have done well, and farmers in most districts have had the assistance of the military authorities in harvesting operations.

The spread of rabbits is assuming alarming proportions, and although high prices ruled for good skins, it has been difficult to obtain the services of good rabbiters.

Sweetbrier is showing a serious tendency to spread, but with the present shortage of labour it would seem that any appreciable attention to the matter will require to be held over until after the war.

SOUTHLAND.

(T. GAGNEY, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

Beyond the fact that winter weather conditions prevailed well into the spring, there is little unusual to report in respect of the climatic conditions experienced in Southland throughout the year, and normal production should be substantially maintained.

Any reduction in the output of dairy-farms as a result of unfavourable spring conditions should be overtaken with the more favourable weather prevailing towards the close of the period.

High-country pastoralists have experienced another good season, the runs are well clothed in pasture, and no snowfalls of any account have been experienced since the heavy fall of 1939.

Approximate Cost of Paper.—Preparation, not given; printing (628 copies), £13 10s.

By Authority: E. V. PAUL, Government Printer, Wellington.—1943.

Price 6d.]