

1944
NEW ZEALAND

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1943-44

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency

Office of the Minister of Agriculture,
Wellington, 20th July, 1944.

SIR,— I have the honour to forward for Your Excellency's information the report of the Department of Agriculture for the financial year ended 31st March, 1944.

This report provides a summary of the principal farming activities of the year and briefly outlines the comprehensive and numerous functions of the Department in its work of maintaining and fostering the growth of the rural industries to the full extent demanded by our wartime commitments.

The accompanying statement by the Director-General of Agriculture reviews the Dominion's agricultural production during the war years and indicates the steps being taken to assist farmers in their efforts towards greater food-production. The reports of the Directors of the Divisions cover all phases of the Department's work.

I have, &c.,
B. ROBERTS,
Minister of Agriculture.

His Excellency the Governor-General.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL

PRIMARY producers of the Dominion are now bringing to a close their fifth season under difficult wartime conditions, and factors have arisen which make it desirable to review achievements and indicate the objectives of the future. Statements have been made to the effect that primary production is on the decline, thereby inferring that farmers are not maintaining their war efforts. There are three major factors outside the control of producers which impinge directly on the volume of output, *i.e.*—

- (1) Climatic conditions :
- (2) Man-power :
- (3) Availability of fertilizers.

CLIMATIC CONDITIONS

Conditions from 1939 to 1942 inclusive were favourable, particularly in respect to dairying. During 1942-43 and 1943-44 the reverse was the case. The season 1942-43 opened with a cold, wet spring, and ended with a short, dry autumn. Feed-supplies were deficient, and cows were in poor condition when they calved in the spring of 1943. A partial drought followed in the more important dairying districts, and the season 1943-44 was saved from disaster by a remarkable autumn recovery. These factors accentuated the effects of a reduced dairy cow population.