

periods during summer. In the far North and east coast districts of the North Island, where severe drought conditions during the summer of 1946 had bared pastures considerably, these wet and mild conditions did much to regenerate them. The winter growth was better than normal and stock in many districts were saved from a period of starvation threatened by the using-up of most reserves of hay and silage before winter began. The drought, however, left its mark; pasture-production in spring was backward, with poor clover growth, and weeds often made their appearance where swards had become thin. This was especially so on the east coast, where winged thistle, Scotch thistle, and in some districts variegated thistle became troublesome. Favourable weather in late spring and early summer was responsible for heavy growth of pastures, giving farmers an opportunity of making good the depleted stocks of hay and silage. In parts of Canterbury serious damage to pastures was caused by the depredations of grass-grub and porina in the winter of 1946, but the mild, wet conditions enabled farmers to bring their stock through the winter satisfactorily and allowed some recovery of the affected areas. In the South Island the use of better strains of grasses and clovers is on the increase, and this, combined with better cultivation and the greater use of lime, is resulting in an all-round improvement of pastures. It is likely that a good many pastures will need renewal in the North Island, where the effects of many years' fertilizer rationing are being felt. An increased allocation of fertilizer, especially for the sowing of new grass, will give a stimulus to pastures during the coming season.

SUPPLEMENTARY FODDER

During the autumn and winter of 1946 considerable movement of hay took place from the south-western part of the North Island to the east coast and to the Auckland Province, where stock-feed was at a dangerously low level. In addition, large consignments of hay and chaff were shipped from South Island ports and it became necessary for the Government to charter special ships to cope with the 4,300 tons of hay and 6,000 tons of chaff which were transported between 1st March and 30th September, 1946. To keep the cost of hay down to a reasonable level for the ultimate purchaser a Price Order was issued setting a maximum price for hay and chaff, while freight and other charges were subsidized. In order to ensure that fodder-supplies were distributed as evenly as possible, special allocation committees were set up by the Department of Agriculture in collaboration with merchants at centres of distribution. With the coming of spring most of the surplus stocks of hay and silage in the North Island had been disposed of, and it was therefore fortunate that sufficient pasture growth became available during summer for large areas of grassland to be closed. There is a marked tendency to bale hay direct from the swath, and the increase in this practice last season made heavy demands on the limited stocks of baling-wire available, although special twine manufactured for the purpose was used as a substitute when available. Root crops grown for supplementary fodder during the present season have been variable. Sowings of swedes were generally late and establishment uneven, but, although crops improved with better weather conditions, yields are likely to be lower than usual, particularly in Southland.

CROPS

Wet conditions in the autumn and again in spring were not conducive to expansive cropping. As a result the area in autumn-sown crops, particularly wheat, was reduced, but there was almost a compensating increase