REPORT OF DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF AGRICULTURE

Despite the expansion in recent years of secondary industries, the economy of New Zealand is still based essentially on primary production. The Dominion is an important contributor to world food-supplies, particularly those of the United Kingdom, and in view of our undertakings to increase exports during the currency of our long-term contracts New Zealand's post-war agricultural policy is of considerable importance.

A review of farming trends since 1920 may assist in assessing our productive resources and guiding future policy. The year 1920 has been selected as it marks the close of one epoch in New Zealand's farming history and the beginning of a new. Up to 1920 the main characteristic of farming development was its extensive nature. Land was plentiful and increases in live-stock numbers were made possible by acquiring and breaking-in new land. Since 1920, however, there has been relatively little expansion of the area occupied, but a much more intensive development of the land already being farmed. It is from a continuation and intensification of this latter trend that, in the main, increased carrying-capacity can be achieved and future production increases must come.

Since 1920 there has been a progressive increase in the volume of live-stock products, as is illustrated by the following tables :—

TABLE I

Year.	Butterfat (Tons).*	Wool (Million Pounds).†	Live-stock Slaughterings (000 Carcasses).‡				
			Sheep.	Lambs.	Cattle.	Pigs.	Calves.
1919–20 ..	60,600	174	3,190	3,281	413	201	..
1929–30 ..	140,200	273	3,992	6,652	367	530	..
1939–40 ..	194,900	310	4,439	10,160	600	826	1,060
1944–45 ..	192,000	372	4,717	10,780	610	679	966
1945–46 ..	164,400	365	5,440	12,741	739	728	983
1946–47 ..	181,200	360	5,037	11,808	719	633	1,085
1947–48 ..	188,000	357	4,640	12,373	712	638	1,174

* Years ended 31st July. † Years ended 30th June. ‡ Years ended 30th September.

INCREASED CARRYING-CAPACITY

The intensification of farming is best illustrated by movement in stock-carrying capacity. Although exact measurement is not possible, the adoption of live-stock and acreage equivalents gives a measure which can be adopted for comparative purposes. In the following table sheep and cattle of all types are expressed as "cattle units" and grazing land as "grass equivalents." The result shows, on this basis, that carrying-capacity has increased from 38·8 to 50·3 per 100 acres since 1920.

TABLE II—THE RELATIONSHIP OF LIVE-STOCK CARRIED AS CATTLE UNITS TO AREA FARMED AS SOWN GRASS EQUIVALENT

Year.	Live-stock as Cattle Units (000's).	Areas as Sown Grass Equivalent (000 Acres).	Cattle Units Per 100 Acres.
1920	6,908	17,802	38·8
1925	7,190	18,170	39·6
1930	8,233	18,770	43·9
1935	8,530	18,581	45·9
1940	9,336	18,733	49·8
1945	9,368	18,791	51·3
1947	9,670	19,233	50·3