

APPENDIX.

REPORT ON SNOWFALL, CHAMBERLAIN, ALBURY, PUNAROA, ETC.

Timaru, 27th July, 1903.

I HAVE the honour to report that I have visited as much of the Chamberlain, Albury, and Punaroa Settlements as possible or advisable.

The snowfall has been very heavy, and more especially on the low ground; and from present appearances the hills will be clear before the flats.

On the Chamberlain Settlement it is impossible to say what the loss will be, as they cannot do anything towards getting the sheep out from the hills. I saw Mr. Winter's son and one of the Wilson Brothers; the latter have only 160 ewes, and have them in the old woolshed and are feeding them. Mr. Winter says he cannot do anything just now. Mr. Hayter was not there, but he has to do the same thing—leave them alone. Mr. Irving, who has been there twenty-two years, never had any trouble on the low ground before; now he has to feed the whole of his sheep, as the snow in places is still 2 ft. deep. On the Albury, Mr. Kennedy, of No. 1 and the small grazing-run, states that so far he has not seen many dead, but he cannot give any estimate of the ultimate loss. All others there who have stacks or chaff are not so much troubled; but for any of them it is a very anxious time. On the Punaroa it is also very severe, the more so as, not being expected, none of the settlers were in any way prepared for it. Mr. Leitch and others are trucking the sheep from Fairlie down to near Timaru, as they all estimate it will be fully a month before they can use the ground again.

I tried to see as many of the settlers as possible, but found that as a matter of policy it was better not to see them, as they will soon make their wants known; and if any anxiety is shown for them beforehand they will ask for more.

I went on Saturday all round Chamberlain and Albury, and on Sunday Punaroa, and then tried to get to Burke's Pass, but the snow had drifted so much in the night that I had to give it up and return to Fairlie. Gangs of men with dogs are working up on the runs, and are having very rough times, and I am afraid that the death-rate of the stock will be very large. Nothing more can be done at present, and I came home this morning to send you as early a report as possible. It will show to the settlers the necessity of saving all the straw and of placing it in such positions—that in such times as the present they can make the best use of it.

I need not further enlarge upon it any more than to say that all the available strength is but of little account to cope with such a sudden and unexpected fall of snow. If a fortunate north-west wind should come it will help matters more than anything else.

W. H. WILLIAMS,

Crown Lands Ranger.

T. Humphries, Esq., Commissioner of Crown Lands, Christchurch.

REPORT ON SNOWFALL, SOUTH CANTERBURY.

Timaru, 9th August, 1903.

I HAVE the honour to report that the districts most affected are from the Hakataramea up to Lake Ohau, all the Tekapo, Pukaki, and north towards the Rangitata; on the front range from the Waimate end all along the Hunter's Hill, the Dalgety's, Rollesby, Sawdon, Ashwick, Clayton, Four Peaks, Orari Gorge, Mount Peel, and across the Rangitata.

The losses on the various runs, as far as can be ascertained now, vary very much, as, for instance, on the Mistake Station they do not expect any serious loss, while on the Balmoral Station the manager expects almost a total loss. At Simon's Pass the loss is heavy, while in 1895 they had the low ground clear and could save the stock. The serious part of the present snowfall is that the flats and low ground are even worse than the hills, as the snow is going away very slowly, and any stock on the low ground seem to suffer the most.

The settlements that have suffered most are Chamberlain, Albury, Punaroa, and Ashwick Flat.

Chamberlain.—Here the tenants are at a great disadvantage, not having any feed in the way of stacks or other feed except what they were buying as they wanted; but Mr. John Rutherford came to the rescue and told them all to come to him for either straw, chaff, oats, or anything he had of use to them. He also interested himself by going out and showing the best spots to work the sheep to, and, in fact, had as much trouble as if the place was still his own. There will be a heavy loss on the most of these holdings.

Albury.—Here the tenants were better prepared in the way of feed, &c., but in all cases it was some time before they could get about to help the stock, and the fall was very heavy all over.

Punaroa.—On this settlement there are some very heavy losses, especially with those settlers on the hill country; others again who could feed the sheep have lost very few.

Ashwick Flat.—Here it was simply a sheet of snow all over, and no banks or downs to get the stock on to. The tenants last week were taking the whole of their stock of sheep down to the low country by Raincliff, where some turnip feed had been secured. As many as could be got out have been railed from Fairlie to Albury. From Fairlie, up to Saturday, the 7th instant, there had been 10,836 sheep sent by rail, and about nine thousand by Raincliff on the road. These were from Sawdon, Ashwick Flat, Punaroa, Strathconan, and other small places. From Albury, 3,100 from Mount Nessing Station. There will also be some thousands from Fairlie during the coming week.

The small grazing-runs along Burke's Pass will also lose heavily, and from the same cause, the low ground being covered so thickly and thawing so slowly.