

1920.

NEW ZEALAND.

## DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE.

ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1919-20.

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

SIR,—

Department of Agriculture, Wellington, 23rd July, 1920.

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

I have, &amp;c.,

W. NOSWORTHY,

Minister of Agriculture.

His Excellency the Administrator of the Government of New Zealand.

## REPORT OF THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE.

THE country is now well into the post-war period of reconstruction—the placing of the national house in order and the further development of our resources. The agricultural and pastoral industries must necessarily be the mainstay of the Dominion in meeting its heavy liabilities, and their efficiency and betterment are essential for the increased production demanded by the situation. Never before has co-ordination of effort among all concerned, to formulate and work out sound measures, been so necessary as at the present time.

We have a splendid field to work on for primary production. Large parts of even the long-settled districts are very much underdeveloped, while in the newer country an immense amount of “cleaning up” could be profitably carried out before further virgin areas are tackled. At the same time there are immense waste or semi-waste areas which are capable of being handled for development purposes, and extensive tracts of depleted country capable of regeneration.

Some of the best farming in the world may be seen in New Zealand, but the general average standard could be considerably improved. This is not necessarily due to lack of knowledge on the part of the farmer; it is largely owing to insufficiency of working resources, man-power, and machine-power. It should be the constant care of the State to aid the man on the land to command these resources. Immigration of farm workers is now being actively promoted, while the various hydro-electric-power undertakings in hand will in due course afford the working farmer relief in many ways. Combined with more widely diffused agricultural instruction, better farming methods, and an extended system of rural credit, these factors cannot fail to largely increase production.

The year under review has by no means been uniformly favourable for agriculture in general as regards climatic conditions. A fairly open winter was followed by an unseasonable spring and early summer, temperatures being abnormally low. During the same period a long spell of dry weather was experienced over extensive areas, mainly in the eastern and far northern districts of the North Island. After the New Year a succession of widespread genial rains reversed the position in most parts, and the late summer and autumn have been very favourable for pastures and crops. One exception was the southern part of the South Island, which experienced an unusually dry summer and early autumn, but has since been relieved by ample rainfall.