

1922.
NEW ZEALAND.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE.

ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1921-22.

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

SIR,— Department of Agriculture, Wellington, 19th August, 1922.

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, &c.,

W. NOSWORTHY,

Minister of Agriculture.

His Excellency the Governor-General.

REPORT OF THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE.

THE agricultural year of 1921-22 may be recorded as, on the whole, a good one in regard to climatic conditions and production. The winter was mild generally, while the summer and autumn were marked by abundant rains, which promoted continued growth of pastures and benefited most crops, although in certain districts unduly prolonged wet periods interfered with the harvesting of cereals. The health of live-stock in general was good, and the Dominion maintained its complete freedom from serious animal-diseases which have been prominent of late in various other parts of the world.

In the pastoral-farming section a high average lambing-percentage was recorded, and lamb-fattening was carried out on an exceptionally extensive scale. The wool-clip as a whole was a good one. The dairy industry had a record year in production, the aggregate quantity of butterfat represented in the official gradings of butter and cheese showing an increase of no less than $32\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. over that of the preceding season (which had also marked a record). Dairying, indeed, is steadily assuming a dominant position among the primary industries of the Dominion. The feature in arable farming was the heavy production of wheat, the area cropped being the largest since 1898-99, and the average yield some 30 bushels per acre. Good yields were also recorded in other cereals. The fruitgrowing, poultry, and beekeeping industries all demonstrated a marked development. On the other hand, in the hemp (phormium-fibre) industry the output again showed a shrinkage, due partly to depressed market conditions, but also largely to disease in the plants in certain important areas. Some improvement as regards this latter factor has been noted of late, however.