

1924.
NEW ZEALAND.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE.

ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1923-24.

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

MY LORD,— Department of Agriculture, Wellington, 15th July, 1924.

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 31st March last.

I have, &c.,

W. NOSWORTHY,

His Excellency the Governor-General.

Minister of Agriculture.

MINISTER'S REPORT.

It is pleasing to be able to record another generally prosperous year for the agricultural industries. Output of our main export staples has been well maintained, while market values have either averaged much on a par with or exceeded those of the preceding year. The weather conditions—which count for so much in farming—exhibited marked contrasts as between different parts of the country or season, lengthy dry spells and abundance of rain having both been experienced. All the important rural districts, however, at least enjoyed favourable periods in which to make good in one or other form of production—with the satisfactory general result just stated.

Perhaps the chief feature of the year was the remarkable rise in the wool-market. All classes of wool were in strong demand, crossbreds sharing in the advance even in greater proportion than the finer sorts. The fifteen or sixteen millions sterling realized by the clip has therefore been well distributed over both Islands. The great bulk of the clip was marketed at the Dominion local sales, which were characterized by strength and advancing prices throughout the season. The slight recession from the top level since reported from London does not appear to possess much permanent significance in view of the statistical position existing with regard to world sheep-stocks and supplies of wool. The practical disappearance of the immense post-war accumulation of Australian and New Zealand wools is a factor of great strength. The present outlook for wool should encourage growers to maintain quality by careful breeding and selection based on the best practical experience combined with scientific knowledge on this subject.

On the meat side of the sheep industry market conditions also favoured the producer, prices for fat lambs and sheep having been maintained at a high level