

In addition to the sawn timber, 327,236 superficial feet of silver-pine posts, poles, strainers, and sleepers were railed to Christchurch, and 640 trucks of mining props and bars, chiefly *Fagus fusca*, were supplied to the coal-mines.

Flax.—The four flax-mills mentioned in last year's report are still in operation. Fibre of an exceptional quality is produced in Westland, and there seems little doubt that the systematic planting of suitable unoccupied areas would be a profitable field for investment. It is understood that negotiations are in progress for the establishment of the industry on a large scale in South Westland.

Revenue.—The total gross revenue for the year, including the Discharged Soldiers Settlement Account, amounted to £23,219. Land revenue amounted to £13,222.

Land Board.—Twelve monthly meetings were held, as scheduled, during the year. The Board dealt with 140 applications for land, 74 transfers, 24 exchanges, 50 applications by returned men for advances, transfers, postponements, &c., and 186 timber licenses, together with the usual volume of miscellaneous work.

Gold-mining.—During the year the Rimu Dredge Co., of America, dredged 26 acres of fresh country and excavated 797,373 cubic yards of material for a return of gold valued at £48,923. In addition to various sluicing claims, boring for subsequent dredging operations is being carried out in various localities.

Land remaining for Selection.—An area of 142 acres of rural land and 10 acres of town land is now in hand, and 105,960 acres of town, village, suburban and rural land is open in the Land Guide.

CANTERBURY.

(W. STEWART, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

The present season has been a particularly good one for most branches of farming. Owing to the dry spell last autumn and the consequent shortage of feed, many farmers faced the winter with a great deal of anxiety, more particularly as many were rather heavily overstocked owing to the poor autumn market for culls. However, the winter proved to be dry, though cold, and stock came through without exceptional losses, though deaths after lambing were in many cases heavier than usual.

The dry winter allowed farm-work to be well advanced; and although spring and early summer were wetter than usual, even this setback assisted the country through the dry spell which has been experienced since Christmas, but which has now broken.

Sheep-men have had a particularly good year. Wool, though generally lighter than last year through shortage of winter feed and a wet spring, has sold at a very satisfactory figure, as also has lamb. Owing to the wet spring, rank growth, and lack of sunshine, lambs did not fatten so early, and the percentage of overweight lambs must be high this season. Stock are now in good condition, there is abundance of feed for the winter, and altogether the sheep-farmers' prospects are encouraging.

In most cases the agricultural farmer has also had a good season. Autumn wheat went in under good conditions, and though some of the heavier land had too much rain in the spring this favoured the lighter lands, where yields have generally been good; so that, taken over the whole district, the yield is much above the average. Rape and turnips also went in under good conditions, and although some did not survive the drought after Christmas, yet winter prospects for the district as a whole are very good. The high overhead charges are a severe handicap to the small mixed farmer.

The dairy-farmer has had a fair season, as prices have been better than last year. The spring growth was late this season, and in the drier areas cows have gone off early owing to dry weather, but in the more favoured dairying districts conditions have been good. Herd-testing, and top-dressing in our wetter localities, are not practised enough in this district.

Those farmers who have been combining pig-raising with dairying have had a disappointing year with this side-line, owing to the heavy fall in prices.

The small farmers on high-priced areas near Christchurch have had only a fair year, as the autumn was dry, spring was late, and since the New Year it has again been very dry. It seems to me that there are too many at this class of production, and that the market is inclined to be heavily glutted at the periods of maximum yield, so that prices are not remunerative. The outside tomato crop was quite three weeks late this year, and the market price lately has been very low. Potato crops this year do not promise as heavy in proportion as other crops. Most fruitgrowers have had a good season. The same remarks apply to the vegetable growers; and poultrymen also have had a fair season.

I believe that throughout this district the rabbit pest is under better control than in past years, and I know of no area in which it can be said they are out of hand.

Runholders who have not been keeping up to the tree-planting conditions of their licenses have this year been reminded that this condition is in future to be more strictly enforced.

Quite a few small threshing plants driven by tractors have this season made their appearance, and are filling a need, as there were not sufficient of the old plants to expeditiously handle a large season's crops.

Land Board Work.—The Land Board held twelve ordinary meetings during the year, each extending over a period of three days, and one special meeting. The number of cases dealt with was 1,360, an increase of 133 on the figures of the previous year. Conversions to freehold and deferred payment, 22; forfeiture and surrenders, 50; renewals of leases and licenses, 14; reofferings (including discharged-soldier settlement properties offered by auction, but exclusive of house properties), 49.

Revenue.—The total revenue for the year was £582,744, including £301,470 derived from discharged soldier settlers.