

greatly assisted by more subdivision and consequently better-regulated grazing and spelling of pastures. The improved tenures for pastoral runs have also been contributing factors towards improvement in our high-country grazing; but probably the greatest factor of all in this improvement has been the control of the rabbit.

A few small-grazing-run leases are expiring shortly, and were considered for renewal during the year, but in no case did the Land Board recommend subdivision, as the runs were not considered to be capable of subdivision.

Agriculturists have not all had a good year. In the heavier land of the northern and southern parts of the district the rather unusual amount of summer rainfall caused rust and other blights, and early crops did not fill well. These weather conditions, however, suited the lighter lands, where yields were up to normal. The good autumn allowed much threshing out of stook, which is estimated to save about 3d. a bushel, but is often carried out at the expense of quality.

In too many cases overcropping is allowing such weeds as Californian thistle to increase, but Crown tenants generally are being given such concessions as have allowed twitch and other weeds to be eradicated.

There is a shortage of turnips this winter owing to the dry autumn, but the rank summer growth produced ample supplies of hay, and there is more green feed this autumn than usual, so that provision for winter feed is up to normal.

Stock did not fatten early this year owing to excessive rainfall, but late fattening conditions have been very favourable.

This year there has been a greatly increased demand for brown-top seed, which has proved an unexpected boon to many Canterbury farmers.

Dairy-farmers have had a good year. Prices have been better, and showery conditions well into summer greatly increased the yields. Where top-dressing has been tried in districts with sufficient rainfall results have been very encouraging. Farmers in most districts now have a guide from the Agriculture Department's experimental plots, both in pasture and crops, and should show increased production in the future, if prepared to be guided by these results.

Fruit-farmers have had good yields, more particularly of apples and pears, but early stone-fruits were affected by too much rain. Outside-tomato growers have, however, not been so fortunate, as heavy storms in January gave the plants a severe setback, and the delayed season caused serious loss. Many potato crops also suffered from the same storms.

Seasonal and market conditions have favoured some small holders but have been against others. Poultrymen have had a better year, owing chiefly to the export trade in eggs, which was fostered by Government guarantee, but also due to lower price of feed, and probably to better organization in the industry itself.

Land Board Work.—The Land Board held twelve ordinary meetings during the year, each extending over a period of three days, and two special meetings. The number of cases dealt with was 1,103.

Revenue.—The total revenue for the year was £608,306, including £323,584 Discharged Soldiers Settlement Account, being an increase of £25,562 on the previous year. This increase is made up of £22,114 Discharged Soldiers Settlement Account and £3,448 in the ordinary revenue. This can be considered very satisfactory, as the increase is purely the result of a good season all round.

Arrears.—It is pleasing to note that the arrears at the 31st March last show a decrease of £13,200 as compared with the amount outstanding at March, 1928. The amount is made up of £6,837 ordinary revenue, and £6,363 Discharged Soldiers Settlement Account.

Postponements.—Postponements outstanding at the 31st March, 1929, are £5,587 less than that for March, 1928.

OTAGO.

(R. S. GALBRAITH, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

A general summing-up of the conditions throughout the whole of Otago leads to the conclusion that the year has been an average one. An exceptionally favourable autumn was followed by a very mild winter, and weather conditions remained good until September, from which month cold snaps and broken weather were experienced. As a consequence spring-sown cereal crops were irregular in maturing, and although some very good yields were obtained the general yield was below the average. On the 7th January a phenomenal hailstorm swept over a long narrow belt of country in North Otago, and while its duration could be measured in minutes its effects could not be readily ascertained. Wheat and oat crops suffered most, but rape and turnip crops, which at first sight appeared to be ruined, recovered to a remarkable degree. A flood in the Molyneux River in October was rather prolonged, and water remained on the adjoining low-lying country for several weeks. The heavy rains in March caused some anxiety on the Taieri Plain, but these proved to be merely local, and the river receded quickly, no appreciable damage being done.

All classes of stock came through the winter in excellent condition, but suffered a setback by the broken weather from mid-spring onwards. Stock losses from snow were extremely light, but holders of high country took no risks and brought their flocks down at the usual time. Some surprisingly good lambing percentages were recorded on the high country, and if wool-prices had been up to last year's level the pastoralists would probably have reaped record returns. The wool-production in Otago has shown a steady and gratifying increase of recent years, an increase which may confidently be expected to continue. The contributing factors to this end are top-dressing of pastures, irrigation,