

The Land Board has still had to deal with many applications for relief, and substantial concessions by way of remissions of payments have been granted where the circumstances warranted such a course, while advances have also been made to a number of settlers for top-dressing and essential improvements with a view to maintaining pastures and increasing production. With the reinstatement of the revaluation provisions of the Land Act, a considerable number of applications for revaluations have already come to hand, and these are now being dealt with by the various Committees.

During the year a fair demand has arisen for desirable farms, both sheep and dairying, by purchasers with substantial cash resources, indicating a returning confidence in the future of farming. Any improved or partly improved properties of the Crown which have been made available for selection have been eagerly sought after, many of the applicants being of a particularly good type.

GISBORNE.

(H. L. PRIMROSE, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

The past year seems to have been conspicuous principally for the general spirit of optimism pervading the whole district. Such a spirit may be rightly interpreted as the end of another slump period and the dawn of better things, and was in marked contrast to the general tone of the few preceding years.

Wool has now reached a good figure again, and the average price will be much better than last year.

In the past twelve months the Gisborne District has experienced an unusually wet period, the rainfall on some places having reached record proportions. There has also been a marked absence of sun during the summer. We can usually look forward to fairly lengthy periods of hot summer weather, but last year was a decided exception. The fattening season was thus delayed, and lambs were very backward. There has been plenty of feed all the year, and stock came through the winter fairly well.

The dairying industry has had a very successful season and conditions were suitable throughout the year for a fairly lengthy season with higher averages during the summer and autumn; but prices for surplus dairy stock are still very low.

The ragwort menace, referred to in my last year's report, is a very real one, and the spread is alarming.

Maize-growers are not too pleased at their prospects, and the backward state of the crops seems to indicate that the frosty weather will be here before the crops mature. Of course, sowing was late this year because of the poor spring, but, then again, the excessive rain, lack of sunshine, and a cyclonic storm tended to make one of the worst years for a long time.

For similar reasons there has been little bush burnt this year, and not much hill country will be sown. This again affects local grass-seed growers, especially rye-grass growers.

HAWKE'S BAY.

(F. R. BURNLEY, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

The past season has been very wet, and serious floods were experienced on several occasions. The storm at the beginning of February did considerable damage, and a large number of stock was lost as a result thereof.

There has been an abundance of feed during the summer and production on dairy-farms has been high, while there has been a heavy demand for sheep, and the price for breeding-ewes has reached, in some cases, £1 19s. 6d. per head.

Wool-prices have shown considerable improvement, and good prices were obtained for fat lambs.

Butterfat-prices have shown an improvement, and with increased production, owing to favourable conditions, the dairy-farmers should have a good season.

With the assistance of subsidies from the Unemployment Board, considerable areas of scrub have been cleared, many miles of new fencing erected, and several miles of drains dug.

Sheep-farmers in the northern portion of the district have experienced considerable losses through liver fluke. Steps are now being taken to combat the menace, and with the construction of many drains in swampy areas and the aid of bluestone it is considered that the work will be successful.

Orchardists have not had a very good season. Prolonged wet weather in the early season was not to their advantage, and the February storm blew a lot of the fruit off the trees, destroyed shelter-belts, and uprooted trees. These settlers will again have difficulty in meeting their obligations.

The arrears of rents, &c., were reviewed during the year, and concessions befitting the circumstances of the cases were made. It is expected that, now the settlers concerned have been relieved of the load of arrears accumulated during the past adverse seasons, their future prospects will be brighter and they should be able to meet accruing charges.

The revenue for the year shows an increase of $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. over the previous year.