

APPENDICES.

APPENDIX I.—SETTLEMENT OF CROWN LANDS.

EXTRACTS FROM THE REPORTS OF THE COMMISSIONERS OF CROWN LANDS.

NORTH AUCKLAND.

(W. D. ARMIT, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

The weather conditions during the past year have been generally favourable to the farming community.

The continued rainfall throughout the district was responsible for a good growth of grass, and consequent on the mild winter the dairy herds came into profit in good condition.

The production of butterfat, cheese, and wool showed a marked increase, as did also the returns of all classes of fat and store stock.

The guaranteed price of butterfat has been beneficial to the dairy-farmers, and this combined with increased production has placed them in a better position financially.

Wool, fat lambs, store stock, and dairy cows commanded satisfactory prices on the market this season, and present appearances point to higher prices ruling for good-quality dairy cows and heifers when close to profit.

Top-dressing has again been the keynote to success, thus ensuring the upkeep of pastures and also maintaining the Department's securities. The wisdom of making refunds for the purpose of purchasing manures has been borne out by the increased revenue received.

An abundance of hay and ensilage has been made this season, thus ensuring a plentiful supply of winter feed.

It is now recognized by dairy-farmers that the raising of pigs as a sideline is a big factor in building up revenue, but more attention should be given to proper housing and better feeding.

The chilled-beef trade is rapidly becoming very popular, and when proper equipment in all overseas vessels is installed more advantage will be taken by producers in the North.

The outlook for the citrus and passion-fruit grower looks decidedly hopeful this year, as in addition to a passion-fruit pulping factory at Kerikeri, an up-to-date lemon-curing factory has just been completed.

Flooding of the low-lying areas occasioned hardship to a number of tenants, but there was less damage to grassland compared with the previous year.

No fresh blocks of Crown lands were opened for selection during the year, but isolated sections amounting to approximately 8,000 acres were selected under various tenures.

Several mangrove-reclamation areas have been stop-banked and handed over to this Department by the Public Works Department for disposal. Negotiations are in progress with adjoining settlers for selection of these lands, it being generally found that "run off" areas are essential for successful farming of mangrove flats.

Advances for land-development are still being made, and those settlers to whom loans have been granted have in a majority of cases sufficient pasture established to enable them to meet their rent and interest charges.

The prevalence of ragwort is causing some anxiety in the North, but settlers realize the danger, and with the assistance of the Department of Agriculture and the County Councils it is being kept well in check. White butterfly, which caused a lot of damage last year to root crops, is not so apparent this year.

On the whole there appears to be a brighter outlook and more confidence amongst the Crown tenants, and this should be more apparent when the adjustments under the Mortgagors and Lessees Rehabilitation Act are completed.

AUCKLAND.

(K. M. GRAHAM, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

Following a satisfactory summer season for dairying last year this district experienced a wonderfully good winter, for, though there were heavy frosts, fine weather prevailed and the pastures did not suffer to any great extent.

The spring came in with an abundance of feed, and frequent rains throughout the whole of the dairying season have kept pastures green and there has been if anything an over abundance of feed for stock.

The sheep-farmers have also experienced a splendid season, despite some late shearing owing to wet and unfavourable weather whilst shearing was in progress. Good lambing was the general experience, and the percentages of lambing were in many cases exceptionally high.

The prevailing high prices for wool, lamb, and beef cattle have all contributed towards making the 1936-37 season one of the best recorded.

The usual demand for suitable dairy-farms and for farms where mixed farming can be carried on has been consistent throughout the year.