

An unfortunate feature of the unfavourable season was the drop in the price of wool and sheep of all classes. The wool-clips have varied throughout the district, but on an average are on a par with the past season. Due principally to the very inclement weather, the lambing percentage on the flats was considerably less than previous years, but on the hilly country the percentages would be on an average with previous seasons.

Owing to the very dry season the dairying industry has suffered considerably, production being down by about 30 per cent., whilst in addition, a number of dairy-farmers have not been able to save sufficient quantities of winter feed. A pleasing feature is that there is a marked increase in the areas under lucerne. This fodder will overcome to a considerable extent the difficulties facing the dairy-farmers in the event of such another season being experienced.

The Waikato markets still draw a large supply of sheep from this district, and, in addition, an increased number have gone to the Hawke's Bay district this year.

The dry season has been an advantage to the fruit industry, and orchardists report that there was a marked decrease in brown-spot in the peaches and nectarines.

Within recent years considerable areas of hilly and undulating country have been slipping rather badly, and with the heavy rains experienced since my last report the areas so affected are rather extensive. In some cases it has been found impossible to hold a fence-line, due to the moving nature of the country, and already numerous settlers are arranging adjustments of their respective boundaries.

Applications for revaluation under section 216 of the Land Act are now being received to an increasing degree, and it is anticipated that a fairly large number of tenants will avail themselves of this provision.

HAWKE'S BAY.

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

The year that has just passed was one of sudden changes, and in many cases of considerable hardship. After floods in the previous February, a fairly dry spell followed, only to be broken by one of the most disastrous floods in the memory of Hawke's Bay. Anzac Day, 1938, will be known for many a day as the year of the big flood, which was caused by several days of torrential rain throughout the province, with cloudbursts in parts.

Communication with Napier was affected by the subsidence of the centre span of the concrete Waitangi Bridge, while the road to Wairoa and Gisborne was impassable for days owing to the loss of the Esk River Bridge, Nuhaka Bridge, and several other important ones on the main highway. The main Wairoa Road was carried away in places, and hundreds of slips occurred. The hill country still bears marked evidence of the extensive slipping that took place. Losses of stock and pasture were exceptionally severe, especially in the well-known Esk Valley, where hundreds of acres were silted up to a considerable depth, and homes were filled up with silt, which had to be dug out.

Following the floods came a fairly mild winter with plenty of feed, and stock generally came through very well. The prospects of a good year were somewhat dimmed by the long dry spell which followed in the summer. This affected the dairymen more than the sheep-farmers, and caused severe dust-storms in the Esk Valley.

Wool-prices were somewhat lower than last year, but, on the other hand, the clip was a much better one, the total being a record one for Hawke's Bay. Fat-stock prices dropped considerably. For instance, fat ewes in November were bringing 9s., as against 16s. the previous year.

All the rehabilitation work is now finished, except for one or two appeal cases not yet heard. The results of this relief legislation are reflected somewhat in our revenue position.

With regard to the fruit-growing industry, the season has been a particularly light one from the point of view of yield, and there was a very considerable drop in the number of cases exported. Growers this year did not suffer much damage from frosts, and there were fairly heavy crops of stone-fruit, the prices all round being fairly good.

TARANAKI.

(A. F. WATERS, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

The autumn of 1938 was warm and humid, with an exceptional growth of grass following a hot dry spell. Unfortunately, on the better-class top-dressed pasture this surfeit of rich feed induced functional disorders in stock, resulting in a form of jaundice, commonly called "facial eczema" on account of its outward manifestation. Mature sheep were chiefly affected, but quite a number of dairy cows suffered from the same complaint. It was difficult for farmers to believe that the disorder was not caused by some infectious disease, as its onslaught was so rapid and widespread.

Lambs and stock generally did not fatten on the sappy grass. There was heavy mortality in hoggets, due to black scour, and many that survived went into the winter with weakened constitutions.

Root crops in many cases were a failure owing to stem-rot induced by the humid conditions.

The sappy grass disappeared quickly with the advent of winter frosts, leaving many farmers short of feed.

Lambing percentages were exceptionally low in the following spring, probably due to the after-effects of facial eczema and unseasonable conditions.

The spring of 1938 was cold and wet with little growth of grass and frequent heavy gales. Difficulty was experienced in haymaking owing to prolonged wet weather and many fields became overmature before they were harvested. The wet weather persisted until the middle of January, to be followed by a protracted dry spell, which continued till the end of March.

Dairy-farmers have had the advantage of guaranteed prices and are little down on their average production.