

did much damage last year. The wet spring, followed by dry conditions, made abundance of grass available for hay, and this has been well saved, so that in the absence of turnips this will have to be generally depended on for winter feeding.

The spring-sown wheat and grain crops generally have turned out better than was expected, but in the Geraldine district a heavy hailstorm was experienced which caused a good deal of damage, but fortunately the storm was largely local and did not cover a wide area. The dry conditions since the New Year have been most beneficial for harvesting-operations.

The potato crops are reported to be light, and the late dry conditions have seriously affected the dairy returns.

While the settler on the low country has received a fair price for crossbred wool, the high-country pastoralist has had a bad year all round. The price offering for fine wool was practically on par with coarse wool, and with heavy expenses for mustering and general high-country costs has shown no margin of profit. Added to this difficulty has been the poor price for surplus stock, there being little demand. This may be accounted for by the failure of the rape and turnip crops on the low country and the general shortage of feed.

Irrigation is being pushed ahead in the Mid-Canterbury district, and when water is available for the large area to be served, and the irrigating of pastures is an accomplished fact over this wide area, then the demand for cross-bred sheep in place of the half-bred hill sheep now run will no doubt become more pronounced.

#### OTAGO.

(W. E. SHAW, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

Climatic conditions during the year just ended have been very favourable. In the autumn the stock were generally in fine fettle, and with a mild winter they came through to the spring in good condition. The frosts were light, and heavy snowfalls were experienced only in a few isolated areas. The biggest set-back was the cold wet snap experienced in January, which rather retarded the growth of rape and root crops. The last two months were particularly dry, but while a little more rain would have been beneficial the warmth was rather welcome after the cold of January.

The grain crops throughout the whole province have given good yields, with some exceptionally heavy crops, particularly in South Otago. The potato crop, too, has over all been very good, and root crops generally have been very satisfactory except perhaps on some of the lighter land, where growth was affected by the lack of rain in February and March.

Lambs have fattened well, the proportion of second-grade lambs being very small. Sheep and cattle have kept in good healthy condition throughout the whole of the year.

The climatic conditions have suited the dairy herds and those engaged in this class of farming, although a comparatively small proportion of the total settlers have had a satisfactory year.

Taken as a whole, the fruit industry has had a fairly successful year. Winter frosts did not do any serious damage, the progressive fruit-farmer being now armed with some frost-fighting apparatus such as fire-pots and is thus able in a great degree to avoid extensive loss. Values were high early in the season, and the later drop in prices was more than offset by the result of the greater yields.

Owing to the prevailing low prices for fine wool and the difficulty of disposing of surplus stock, the year has been rather discouraging for the high-country sheep-farmer. It should be mentioned, also, that the rabbit pest has made great strides in the high country; sweetbrier, also, is gaining a hold on some of the pastoral lands, while St. John's wort is spreading on portions of the Wakatipu lands. Rabbits are also definitely on the increase in the bush country in the south.

The area in grain crops has decreased, but probably this is just as well, as in some localities, notably Central Otago, constant grain-cropping has taken its toll from the soil.

#### SOUTHLAND.

(T. CAGNEY, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

Notwithstanding stormy weather of marked severity during the greater part of the summer, the year as a whole proved a successful one for farmers and production in all classes of farming was maintained.

Root crops, particularly later sowings, suffered a serious set-back as the result of the stormy weather experienced at a vital stage of the growth, and turnip crops, mainly on that account, cannot be relied on to the usual extent for winter feed.

Taking into account earlier unfavourable climatic conditions, white crops yielded surprisingly well, and the weather recovered in time to permit of successful harvesting. Difficulty was experienced in harvesting some of the heavier oat crops, which were beaten down to some extent by the earlier stormy weather.

The season was a favourable one for fescue-growers. Although rye-grass yielded well, early tests for germination were disappointing. Some small areas of huskless oats were successfully cropped, and no doubt the cropping of this seed will be further exploited.

Reports from cheese and butter factories point to the output of dairy-farms being well maintained. With the abundant growth of grass noticeable towards the end of the period and the favourable climatic conditions prevailing, a longer milking season than usual might be expected. No cases of any serious abortion or trouble otherwise in dairy herds have been reported.

Lambs generally fattened well up to the average. A disappointing fall in the sale prices of fat and freezing ewes was disclosed in earlier sales. Flocks, on the whole, appear to have come through the period in a sound and healthy condition and without any undue death rate. High-country graziers generally experienced a year free of any snow losses of stock.

The white butterfly was again in evidence in limited numbers this year, but not to any increased degree as compared with the previous year. The diamond-back moth, which caused considerable damage to turnips and other green crops last year, was very little in evidence this season.