

SESSION II.
1923.
NEW ZEALAND.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE.

ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1922-23.

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency

MY LORD,— Department of Agriculture, Wellington, 30th June, 1923.

I have the honour to forward herewith, for Your Excellency's information, the report of the Department of Agriculture of the Dominion for the financial year ended 31st March last.

I have, &c.,

W. NOSWORTHY,

His Excellency the Governor-General.

Minister of Agriculture.

MINISTER'S REPORT.

THE agricultural year of 1922-23 may be fairly described as a good all-round period for primary producers in New Zealand. Production of our main staples has been heavy, average market prices satisfactory in general, and financial conditions distinctly easier compared with the preceding season. Climatically the main season in most parts of the Dominion has been marked by an exceptionally high average rainfall. Generally speaking, this proved of great benefit to the grasslands, and to those leading branches of farming mainly based on pasturage. Floods, unfortunately, were experienced during the past autumn in certain localities liable to inundation, as a result of abnormal falls.

The chief feature of the year has been the phenomenal expansion of the dairy industry, as evidenced by another big advance in production and all-round development. With a surplus output this season of some 66,000 tons of butter and 60,000 tons of cheese New Zealand may claim to have become the largest exporter of dairy-produce in the world. As a supplier of the British market we have now actually taken the lead in cheese, and are running close up to Denmark for first place in butter-supply. The manufacture and export of dried milk has now reached a volume which warrants its regular inclusion statistically, while preserved milk, casein, and sugar of milk must also be reckoned with. Further great expansion of the industry may be confidently anticipated. Large tracts of fresh land are being brought in, and older pastures improved by top-dressing; the growing of auxiliary forage crops is increasing, and better feeding-methods practised generally. Together with these factors is the present remarkable development of the herd-testing system, which, by gradually eliminating unprofitable animals, cannot fail to result in a steady increase in the average yield of dairy cows in the Dominion. Complementary to this movement is the valuable certificate-of-record testing-system, which provides authenticated purebred sires for grading up the ordinary