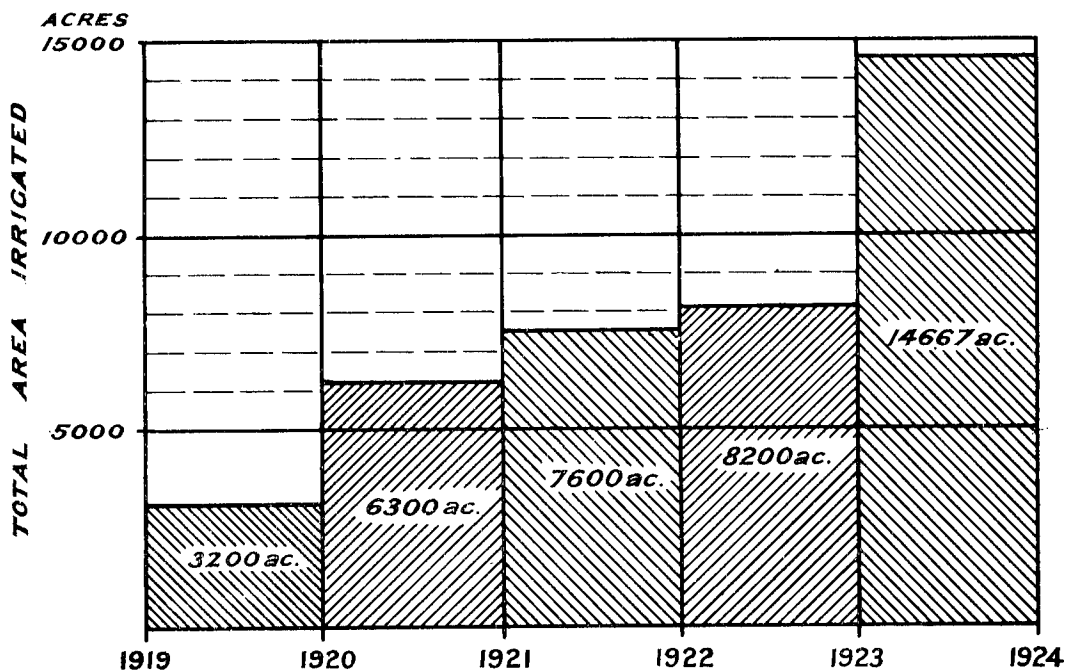


IRRIGATION AND WATER-SUPPLY.

Another step in the steady progress of irrigation development took place during the year just closed. No new construction works were started, but work was confined to pushing on and extending the several works previously in hand.

Although the profit on the older schemes is not expected to pay a high rate of interest on the outlay (owing to excessive war costs, &c.), an examination of their position shows that in due course they will pay a reasonable rate of interest, besides rendering enormous indirect benefits. All the later schemes, estimated upon steadier known costs and experience gained, are based on water rentals calculated to return sound rates of interest.

The actual area irrigated under all the Government schemes was 14,700 acres, divided among 200 settlers, as against 8,200 acres in the previous year. The graph below shows the growth of irrigation under the Government schemes for the past five years.



In their partial stages of completion the works were ready to serve 47,500 acres, but when completed towards the end of the current year the total area commanded by the Government supply will be increased to 61,400 acres.

As settlement increases and full advantage is taken of the water-supply available a great increase in the productivity of Central Otago would appear to be assured.

RESULTS ACHIEVED.

The business arising from the areas irrigated has greatly increased, as will be gathered from the statement appended below showing the business handled outwards at railway-stations Otarehua, Omakau, and Alexandra for the year 1913-14 as compared with the year 1922-23 :—

	1913-14.	1922-23.	Increase.
Sheep ..	46,000	70,700	54 per cent.
Goods ..	3,010 tons	6,200 tons	106 „
Passengers ..	5,900	7,452	26 „

The results of irrigation have everywhere been most satisfactory, and this is particularly noticeable on Galloway Flat. This small area of about 1,200 acres was previously useless, but is now supporting twenty settlers and regularly carrying and wintering fifty horses and 250 head of cattle, besides producing enormous quantities of surplus hay.

The Ardour irrigation scheme was in working-order during the past season, and the results so far obtained have fully justified expectations.