

Dairying: The season commenced very favourably for dairying; in fact, throughout last winter spring-like conditions obtained, the farmers having a difficulty in drying their cows off. The average increased production of the largest factory in this district shows about 20 per cent. for the months of August to December. During January and February a long spell of dry weather reduced the average increase to about 15 per cent.

Wairoa.—The past season throughout the Wairoa County has been exceptionally good for the farming community. There was an abundance of feed, and the wool came off the sheep in superior condition, especially that early shorn, and the prices were about on a par with the previous year, which, it will be remembered, were high. Stock-prices opened very firm, and went up as the season advanced. This was chiefly caused by the abundance of feed, which had to be kept down, and in some instances store prices were in excess of fat prices. Cattle were, and still are, in great demand, and many farmers were tempted to sell at the high prices ruling, to the detriment of keeping their country in order. Owing to the high prices ruling for store sheep fewer fats than usual went into the local freezing-works. Generally the farmers through the district have had a splendid year, and the prospects for the next season appear to be good.

East Coast.—**Dairying:** Though the season opened most favourably, there is not likely to be any increase on last season's output, although an increase seemed assured until the latter part of February and early in March, when a dry spell set in and affected the supply of cream to a large extent. Owing to the top-dressing carried out by most of the dairy-farmers there was at no time of the season any shortage of feed, but the trouble in most cases was the shortage of good water-supply. The prices realized for butterfat have been the best for a number of years.

Bay of Plenty.—**Dairying:** Owing mainly to the mildness of the season and the plentiful supply of nourishing fodder, the dairying season continued fully ten months—namely, from July to May—without doubt one of the most successful seasons experienced in that district for many years.

Sheep-farming: From a sheep-farmer's point of view the season has been one of the best experienced in that district. The lambing percentage was quite good, and in most cases considerably better than the average. Though the price for wool was not quite so good as last season, it was satisfactory and quite a payable proposition. Excellent prices were received for all store sheep, and the same remarks apply to both station and dairy cattle. This district has not experienced anything like the wet weather that the Gisborne, Wairoa, and coast districts have had, and the prospects are very bright for the coming year.

Lands opened for Selection.—The best areas opened for selection during the year were two comparatively large sections on what is known as the Tuparoa Consolidation, near Ruatoria. These two sections were looked upon as being first-class propositions, and keen competition was expected. The Board was considerably surprised when there was only one application for each section.

Several forfeited sections in the Waioeka part of the district were withdrawn, and offered on renewable lease rent-free for five years, but with one or two exceptions failed to find selectors. Several small sections in townships, &c., offered for sale by public auction were disposed of at satisfactory prices. It would appear that at the present time there is not much demand for land in this district.

Arrears of Rent.—In a few cases settlers are badly in arrear, but in the majority of cases the rent came in well. The season, as reported elsewhere, has been an exceptionally good one, and all farmers should have been able to pay their way.

Board Work.—The Board held twelve meetings during the year, and the amount of work dealt with was equal to normal. I would again express appreciation of the conscientious and painstaking work of the Board members, and of the harmonious relations which exist between the Board and legal and mercantile firms.

HAWKE'S BAY.

(J. D. THOMSON, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

The year just ended has been another very good one in most ways—particularly in the dairying line it was an improvement on the previous year. The winter was a wet one, but very few severe frosts were recorded, and there was plenty of feed for stock. During the spring strong westerly winds ruled, and appearances pointed to a dry summer. However, this was not realized, and an excellent summer was experienced—not much rain in January and February, but a normal fall in March. As a consequence there was no setback as was experienced in the previous year, but ample feed was the rule and not the exception.

Stock has done well generally. The lambing percentage was not so good as in the previous year, averaging from 70 to 80 per cent.; the quality of the lambs, however, was mainly excellent, and there have been many fine returns from fat lambs, especially on farms where top-dressing has been carried out. The wool-clip was a good average one, but the price realized was not quite up to last year's figure. This was more than compensated for by the splendid prices obtained for fat lambs.

The dairy-farmer has had a splendid season, in that there has been no scarcity of feed or lack of water; and although there has been some trouble with abortion in different parts, this has not been general, and has not affected the milk returns to any extent. The price of butterfat is well maintained, and the average dairy-farmer should be very satisfied with the result of the season's work. It is gratifying to note that more attention is being given to testing and culling, but there is still much to be done in this direction before an average of at least 300 lb. of butterfat becomes the realized aim of all dairy-farmers. The price of beef has been high, and this has affected the pastures, as farmers who wished to purchase cattle in order to eat off the surplus growth have in many cases not been able