

are now in parts ruined by running shingle, which is carried into the rivers and further afield in times of flood. Some of this country may to a limited extent be re-established with the aid of fencing, surface-sowing, and judicious stocking, or actually shutting up the country for a period. The most serious difficulty is to stop the shingle moving, and allow vegetation to obtain a footing. In a few cases, in addition to resting the country, the weed commonly called borage is being tried, apparently with advantage, the weed binding and allowing the tussock to return.

## WESTLAND.

(W. T. MORPETH, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

*Conditions and Progress of Settlement.*—As regards weather conditions the past season has been normal, and the farming community has had a good average season. The decline in the price of wool has been, of course, an adverse feature, but fortunately the prices for all classes of cattle have been well maintained and the demand for this class of stock exceeds the supply. A limited amount of fertilizing has been carried out in the district, but what has been done is a long way short of what could be undertaken. There is, I think, no doubt at all that the outstanding problem in the Dominion at the present time is to increase the producing-capacity of rural lands from a 20 per cent. or 30 per cent. capacity to full capacity.

*Lime-works.*—The two lime-works at Kowhitirangi and Ross are still in active operation.

*Timber.*—The total output of sawn timber for the year was 76,411,500 superficial feet, a record for Westland, and an increase of 5,961,100 superficial feet on last year's figures. Of this total 36,741,700 superficial feet were cut from Warden's licenses, 3,389,000 ft. from Crown land, 18,687,200 ft. from freeholds, and the balance of 17,593,600 ft. from State forest. The quantity of timber exported overseas amounted to 22,725,400 ft., against 21,718,000 ft. last year. A total of 33,949,200 ft. passed through the Otira Tunnel. Besides the sawn timber, 358,100 silver-pine posts, poles, strainers, and 129 trucks of mining props and laths were cut on Crown lands and provisional State forest.

*Flax.*—In addition to the four flax-mills which have been in operation in the district for some years, the area at Groves Swamp is being developed, the preliminary operations being in full swing, and there is little doubt that this area will soon be a going concern. Some little delay has occurred with reference to the Rotokino Swamp, but it is understood that this is temporary only, and there is every probability that this proposition will eventually also be in active operation.

*Gold-mining.*—During the year the Rimu Gold-dredging Company of America dredged 34,499 acres of fresh country, excavated 2,172,370 cubic yards of material, and won gold to the value of £49,300. The Okarito gold-dredging concern at the Five-mile Beach is pushing ahead with the preliminary development work, and it is expected that gold will be won early in the forth-coming year. The Hohonu Gold-dredging Company is still carrying on, together with one or two small one-man or two-men private sluicing claims.

## CANTERBURY.

(W. STEWART, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

The past season has been a trying one for almost all classes of farmers, as weather conditions have been so variable and prices have been falling throughout the season for almost all produce. A very mild autumn and early winter allowed seasonal cultivation to be well in hand and gave stock a good chance, but winter closed very wet and cold. This was followed by a late and wet spring, and again by very frequent mid-summer rains which caused considerable anxiety to agriculturists and delayed high-country shearing, while the present prolonged drought is responsible for much concern for the coming winter.

Pastoralists have not had a good season, for conditions in spring were hard on stock, affecting the volume and quality of their products, and prices for wool and store sheep have fallen heavily. Some areas suffered heavily from snow losses of sheep, but this was fortunately not universal. Lambing tallies have been lighter than average, owing to the death-rate after lambing. The decline in wool-values has again been more marked for the finer wools, and sales of surplus fine-wool sheep have been very disappointing. Even though store sheep have been too high for some years, the present decline has brought prices to the other extreme.

Rabbits have been kept well in hand, but many complaints are now made concerning the deer, more especially by those who are trying to improve their holdings by planting.

Agriculturists have also had a trying season. Cereal crops over the whole district have been rather lighter than last year, though linseed as a rule has been better. Root crops and rape have been only fair, and over many areas failed altogether, necessitating green feed as replacement.

Lambs did not fatten well in the earlier part of the season as the wet spell was causing too rank growth, and less than the usual number went away off their mothers. The works have been rushed during the latter part of the season, and the threatened strike caused much anxiety, as the carry-over is already serious with the present prospect for winter feed.

Lambing in the front country was good and partly compensates for the reduced price; extra grazing is being keenly sought in all parts of the district to conserve winter feed. A new lime-crushing plant has been established in the Albury district, which makes three in South Canterbury, and these are supplying a much-needed want and are greatly assisting in improving much of our areas, more particularly our foothill settlements.