

1933.  
NEW ZEALAND.

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# DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE.

ANNUAL REPORT for 1932-33.

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

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Wellington, 30th September, 1933.

SIR,—

I have the honour to forward herewith, for your Excellency's information, the report of the Department of Agriculture for the financial year ended 31st March, 1933.

The report again reveals the large and varied volume of work carried out by the Department in the interest of all our primary production industries, and shows that its many services and research activities have been well maintained. The work accomplished indicates a true keenness to do the best possible under difficulties resulting from the current financial position. Special mention may be made of the thorough and effective measures adopted by the veterinary staff and the assisting Inspectors in dealing with the recent outbreak of swine fever, complete success in eradicating the disease resulting.

As regards primary production, the past year must be regarded as an excellent one generally, a favourable season, combined with extra effort on the part of the farmers, having led to increased output in most branches, notably the dairy industry. The total sheep stock registered a further shrinkage (due to well-understood economic reasons), but with breeding-ewes once more on the up-grade the position is capable of fairly rapid rectification. Further increases in cattle and pigs have lent additional potential strength to the dairy-produce, beef, and pork sections.

The period covered by the report witnessed generally the lowest ebb of price-falls in the Dominion's staple products as affected by the economic depression. It is therefore extremely satisfactory to be able to record a decided improvement since the close of the year, especially in butter, wool, and lamb. It is to be hoped that the resulting increases in farm income will before long react beneficially on farm practice at various important points. Of special importance would this be in checking the renewed fall recorded in fertilizer consumption, by enabling our grassland farmers to restore or increase their essential top-dressing programmes.

A chief care of the Government's policy in this critical period has been to keep hard-pressed primary producers on their farms, and to thus maintain the means of external trading power so essential to the country's financial structure. Among the measures taken with this object are subsidies on the manufacture and railage of fertilizer, together with subsidized railway rates on primary produce under certain conditions. Additional funds for this purpose are being allocated to the budgetary estimates of the Department of Agriculture for the current financial year. This accounts for the increased total proposed expenditure shown; the Department's services proper, unfortunately, have had to bear some further share of economy.

The most encouraging feature for our agriculture at the present time is the decided industrial improvement manifested in Britain, bringing with it better purchasing-power on the part of our best customer. It can be most sincerely hoped that a steady return to sound prosperity in the Mother-country will eventuate, with the natural result of a steady improvement in conditions here.

I have, &c.,

CHAS. E. MACMILLAN,

Minister of Agriculture.

His Excellency the Governor-General.