

WESTLAND.

(B. KING, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

As the rainfall during the latter half of the past year was some 20 in. above normal with the sunshine recorded showing a corresponding decrease, the past season has been anything but a favourable one for the farming interests. Although there has been an abundant supply of feed it is anticipated that the returns of butterfat per cow will be considerably below those of the previous year, but with the higher prices ruling the gross income will show a decided increase.

Although the climatic conditions were unfavourable for dairying, they have in no way affected grazing pursuits, and graziers of both sheep and cattle have experienced a good season.

Lambing percentages were well maintained, most flocks showing 100 per cent. and over, and prices realized for fat lambs in most cases exceeded expectations.

The total revenue for the year was £17,299 18s. 11d., as against £14,432 8s. 8d., an increase of approximately £3,000.

CANTERBURY.

(N. C. KENSINGTON, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

The weather conditions in the early part of the year were unfavourable to the agricultural farmer, but favoured the pastoralist in that heavy rains extended into March and April. Cultivation for supplementary feed and crops was retarded. Fortunately, winter was comparatively mild except for rains in July. Spring was later than usual, but November rains had beneficial effect, and prospects for good harvest appeared assured. Continuous heavy rain for three months, however, did heavy damage to crops.

Though stock came through winter very well the heavy rains were against the fattening of lambs, the feed being soft and rank, with consequent mortality. Harvesting and shearing were held up unduly.

Pastoralists in high country had a good year, there being no serious snow losses. There was a fair average lambing, and all surplus store sheep and lambs brought the highest prices for years. The wool clips were good and brought excellent prices.

Dairy-farmers had the most successful season for a long period. Production was well maintained and stability of prices was a satisfactory feature.

Orchardists had a fair year, but tomato-growers had a bad season owing to cold rains and heavy frosts.

Taking everything into consideration, it has been a good season, as the high prices obtained for most farm produce have greatly improved the general outlook of many farmers.

OTAGO.

(F. H. WATERS, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

From the general reports by the Field Inspectors the past year has been a good one as regards the prices for wool, lambs, and surplus stock.

Dealing with the high-country runs conditions were somewhat varied, the north-western part of the district experiencing good winter conditions with low losses, while the high-country runs in the north-east suffered through some heavy drifting snowstorms, with considerable losses and a poor lambing percentage.

In North Otago the settlers on the lower country have had an excellent season, lambs fattening well and good prices being obtained for the coarser wools.

The southern part of the district has not been so fortunate, as a very broken spring and summer has been experienced. Lambs have not fattened well, and harvesting operations have been greatly delayed and crops spoilt. The turnip crop is not up to the usual standard, and on the low-lying areas near Balclutha serious flooding in November and December has had a marked effect on the dairy returns.

In Central Otago the showery weather experienced was most beneficial, and reports show that good barley crops have been grown on the Hawea Flats. There has been a splendid growth of grass, and excellent returns from wool and lambs.

Unfortunately, the weather experienced in Central Otago has not been beneficial to the orchardists and the growers of small fruits. With little bright sunshine the crops have not ripened well, while a severe frost which occurred in October did a good deal of damage in scattered areas, principally to the stone-fruit. It is expected that the apple crop will show a better return, and this may improve the position.

The different schemes for the conservation of water for irrigation purposes have been pushed ahead by the Public Works Department, and settlers who come within these schemes are now able to bring areas under irrigation, which should be reflected in the near future in an increase in flocks and the fattening of lambs.

In reviewing matters over the past year, it can safely be said that the average settler has had an increased return and his position has improved accordingly.