

1939.
NEW ZEALAND.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE.

ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1938-39.

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

Office of the Minister of Agriculture,
Wellington, 25th July, 1939.

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, 1939.

The report provides a summary of the principal features of the farming year and outlines the activities of the Department in its work of maintaining and fostering the growth of the rural industries. Once again the report shows that the Department has made progress in several important directions, notably in extension of its research and advisory services, and I am convinced that it is in the co-ordination of research and instruction that my Department can be of greatest influence in the furtherance of agricultural and pastoral efficiency.

Our first duty is to approach the farmers' problems in a scientific and systematic manner, and when our investigations have revealed information of value to the primary producer it is then our duty to disseminate that information as widely as possible in a form which can be quickly assimilated and applied. In this policy the Department has already achieved a fair measure of success, and I confidently look for further developments along these lines. Whenever it is possible farm advisory committees are being set up to assist the departmental officers in this work, and I wish to pay a tribute to the work of those committees which have already been established.

On the administrative side the most important innovation has been the setting-up of an entirely new division of the Department called the Animal Research Division, which came into being in March last. The functions of the new Division are to co-ordinate the whole of the animal-research work conducted by the Department and to act in co-operation with other institutions. At present the staff is comprised of thirty-three professional, twenty-nine technical, and fifteen clerical officers, and representations have already been made for the appointment of several other professional and technical officers. The annual loss to farmers through disease among stock is a heavy one, and the Government is determined to take the fullest measures to alleviate the position.

It is estimated that during the current financial year approximately £60,000 will be spent by the Department in prosecuting animal research, and of this amount approximately £20,000 will be spent in salaries. New laboratories are