

Vegetation was showing signs of growth, but had not entirely recovered from the cold and wet weather of the preceding months and the season was somewhat backward. At the beginning of the month two depressions of the type which had been so frequent earlier in the year crossed the North Island. These caused heavy rain over the North Island, with snow on the high levels. There was some flooding again in Auckland and Hawke's Bay. Thereafter westerly weather prevailed. On the 10th a northerly gale in the central provinces caused much damage to telegraph and power lines, fences, &c.

*September.*—Dull, cold, and wet weather prevailed again during the first few days, but from the 10th onward, and especially after the 18th, there was a marked improvement. Temperatures became mild, the atmosphere was dry, and there was little rain in most districts. The total rain was, on the whole, below the average. Mean temperatures for the month were everywhere slightly above normal, and though there were several snowfalls there was no severe cold. Sunshine was, on the whole, somewhat below average. For the farmer the month was generally a good one. The soil, which had in many places been water-logged, dried out. Chiefly due to difficulties earlier in the year, the percentage of lambs was considerably below that of the preceding two years. Southland and parts of Otago continued to experience dry weather. On the 2nd to the 3rd a very boisterous southerly gale blew in Cook Strait and on the east coast of the South Island. Unsettled and rather stormy conditions occurred at intervals until the 18th, but thereafter anticyclonic conditions prevailed and disturbances were of only slight intensity.

*October.*—Until about the 20th the weather was dry with a prevalence of strong westerly winds. Thereafter it was humid and good rains fell, especially in the South Island. At the end of the month, however, there was still a considerable shortage of moisture in most districts and the growth of pasture was distinctly backward. There were good rains in Canterbury and Otago, which were very opportune, but elsewhere totals were below average. Mean temperatures were almost everywhere above normal and there were few frosts. Sunshine was generally much above average. Conditions were very favourable for stock, especially lambs, but the milk-yield was below normal. Apart from pastures, vegetation flourished, and the spring, though late, was a very active one. A depression passing between the 9th and 11th was responsible for severe north-westerly gales, especially in Wellington and Canterbury. On the 11th there was snow on the hills of Banks Peninsula. Otherwise there were no storms worthy of special note.

*November.*—November completed one of the best springs of recent years. Temperatures were warm and there was enough rain to ensure vigorous growth of vegetation. The distribution of rainfall was rather irregular, but most districts had more than average. Except on the Canterbury Plains, mean temperatures were considerably above normal and no extremes of heat or cold were experienced. Sunshine was below average except in the far south. In a few places growth was still rather backward, owing to drying winds or previous lack of rainfall, but generally the country was looking particularly well and pasture was abundant. Numbers of native trees produced a remarkable amount of blossom. This was especially noticeable with the cabbage-tree and the beech. The beech forests have seldom displayed such a warmth and variety of colour. Stock were thriving, although some trouble was experienced with lambs, chiefly owing to parasites. The milk-yield was well up to standard. On the 8th and 9th there were some severe local downpours in Central Otago. One at Coal Creek, near Roxburgh, did serious damage to a number of orchards. In other cases large areas of pasture were destroyed. On the 21st there were boisterous south-westerly gales, and a heavy fall of snow occurred on the high levels in Otago and Southland.

*December.*—A most unseasonable month; cold and wet with persistent strong winds in many places. Rainfall was much above average. The southern half of the South Island and areas in the centre of the North had the wettest December on record. Night temperatures were very low, and there were numbers of frosts. Snow fell relatively frequently on the ranges. Sunshine was below average. Thunderstorms were unusually numerous. On two occasions remarkably persistent thunderstorms, lasting for hours and accompanied by continuous rain, occurred in the central provinces, especially on the west coast. A number of cloud-bursts were again experienced in the South Island. The exceptionally frequent rains interfered with haymaking, while shearing and cultivation operations were much delayed, especially in the higher country. The growth of pasture was well maintained. Stock were in good condition, but lambs were not fattening well. The cold and damp retarded the progress of crops and garden plants. Blights were rather prevalent. The storms experienced were mainly of the westerly type. Severe north-westerly or northerly gales occurred on the 8th and the 10th. On the first date a tree was blown into a train at Styx, while on the second a 75-ton crane was overturned at Greymouth.

*Year.*—The outstanding feature of the year was the almost tropical conditions of warmth and humidity which prevailed from January to April inclusive. May, also, was very warm, but in contrast with the preceding months it was very dry. The only previous period experienced in New Zealand since records began which is comparable in warmth with the summer of 1937–38 and the autumn of 1938 was the summer of 1934–35. On the latter occasion the warm spell began earlier and was of shorter duration. Furthermore, drought prevailed for a large part of the time. From the end of the first week in June until the beginning of August in 1938, cold, wintry weather prevailed. In the southern part of the South Island the cold was severe, and eucalyptus trees, for example, suffered much damage from frost. Elsewhere, though the departures from normal were not large, and in many cases were positive, coming after the continued warmth of the earlier months, the fall of temperature was felt very much. Growth of vegetation ceased almost entirely. From August until November mild weather predominated, and the spring, though rather belated, was an excellent one, especially in the South Island. There was abundance of pasture, and the flowering of trees and plants was unusually prolific. December was cold, wet, and windy.