

many owners who for their own sake and credit will keep their lands clear, and there are others who will not do so except under stress. The former are detrimentally affected. A law has to be made to protect the latter against themselves. The intentions and requirements of the Act are well known to all landowners, except that they may not be aware of what weeds are declared in their particular districts. The Act has been the subject of such endless controversy that no owner can plead ignorance. The nature of weed desired to be cleared is generally endorsed on the "Reminder Notice" by the Inspector. All are expected to know the law. This is a point emphasized by Magistrates from the bench. It has been suggested that the country might be divided into belts and dealt with according to the requirements in each—in one belt the Act to be strictly enforced, in a second a certain amount to be done, and a third little to be insisted on. This would be unworkable. It would not be advisable to even have a purely departmental arrangement of classifying. Owners and occupiers would not agree to this.

Legislation is required to deal in some way with absentee properties, which are to be found in every inspectorate and generally become overgrown with weeds that are never attended to, and are consequently a source of annoyance to adjoining owners and to Inspectors. In some instances notices have been posted on the properties, and after a time the weeds cleared under the Act by the Inspector, but the difficulty is in recovering the cost, even if the owner might be found. The Act also requires amending to provide for the control of weeds on foreshores and river-margins—that is, where there are strips of land between a foreshore and a public road, or between a river or creek and a public road. Harbour Boards and County Councils or Road Boards nearly always disclaim liability in such cases.

Noxious weeds on Crown lands are still a cause of great annoyance and irritation to the public, and the position in this matter demands attention.

Local bodies sometimes make an apparent mistake in declaring the whole of the Third Schedule. It becomes unworkable. They should therefore have the power to withdraw certain weeds from the operation of such schedule when considered advisable.

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## DAIRY DIVISION.

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### REPORT OF THE DIVISIONAL DIRECTOR.

The Director-General.

Wellington, 29th May, 1919.

I FORWARD herewith the annual report of the Dairy Division for the year ended 31st March, 1919. I desire to acknowledge the able assistance received from Mr. W. M. Singleton, Assistant Director, in connection with the control of the year's operations.

D. CUDDIE, Director.

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### THE SEASON.

The prospects for a profitable dairying season for the first months of the period under review were by no means favourable, owing to the inclemency of the weather conditions prevailing. The spring, following upon a somewhat severe winter, was late, and the weather at that time being cold and wet the supply of milk to cheese and butter factories was considerably less than that at the corresponding period of the previous year. To a more or less extent this applied to all dairying districts throughout the Dominion. In the district north of Auckland, however, the unfavourable spring was succeeded by a lengthy period of exceptionally dry weather, attended with a consequent shortage of grass, which materially curtailed the quantity of milk produced in that locality for the whole season. In fact, in this particular district the season has been one of the shortest on record.

In the Province of Taranaki there was a heavy mortality of dairy cows, due to the lack of sufficient feed for these animals during the winter and early spring months. Even many of those that survived were in such a low condition owing to semi-starvation that they gave considerably less milk for some time after the season began. As the year progressed, however, the weather conditions greatly improved; feed became plentiful in the majority of the districts, and continued in abundance throughout the summer months. Thus the production of milk again became normal, and held out well towards the end of the season.

The low atmospheric temperature experienced for the first half of the season no doubt interfered with the production of milk to a considerable extent. At the same time, it was beneficial in respect to the flavour of the milk and cream delivered for the manufacture of cheese and butter.

When it is remembered that the industry has been carried on under abnormal conditions, including a shortage of skilled help on the farms and also in the factories, owing to so many employees being absent from New Zealand with the Expeditionary Force, together with the serious epidemic of influenza which swept over the land at the height of the season, it is gratifying to be able to record a good dairying season.

### EXPORTS.

Although the production of butter during the year was less than for the previous year, the quantity exported shows an increase over last year's figures of 172,110 cwt. This is accounted for by