

SESSION II.
1921.
NEW ZEALAND.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE.

ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1920-21.

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

SIR,—

Department of Agriculture, Wellington, 5th October, 1921.

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

I have, &c.,

W. NOSWORTHY,

Minister of Agriculture.

His Excellency the Governor-General.

REPORT OF THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE.

THE past agricultural year was marked by the cessation of the Imperial Government purchases of the Dominion's main primary products arising out of war conditions. Wool, sheep-skins, meat, and cheese were decontrolled before the beginning of the new season; the butter contract was extended, but in its turn came to a close at the end of March. The period of stabilized values, which had proved a dominant factor in maintaining the prosperity of the Dominion, was thus succeeded by a return to all-round open market trading.

The season of 1920-21 arrived with apparent good prospects for the frozen-meat trade, but these soon proved unstable. This was the result, firstly, for a time, of a most unfortunate dispute regarding the wages of freezing-works employees, which prevented practically all the North Island works from opening before the New Year; and, secondly, owing to apparently uncertain forward market conditions in England and consequent pessimistic forecasts, which caused a rapid reduction from the prices of stock ruling immediately after the New Year. As time went on this slump proved to have been premature, as values, except for beef and heavy mutton, remained steadily at a good level in the London market for months afterwards.