

The scarcity of labour generally during the period under review and the high wages demanded did not encourage occupiers to carry out the necessary work, and under the present financial conditions the administration of the Act in the direction of getting weeds cut, or even in maintaining the position obtained, will be difficult.

STAFF.

To the members of the staff I desire to convey my thanks for the assistance they have rendered in the carrying-out of the numerous duties asked of them. Good work has been done by the District Superintendents and Principal District Inspectors at Dunedin, Christchurch, Wellington, and Auckland, and by the officers of all grades acting under them; while Mr. F. C. Brown, Chief Poultry Instructor, Messrs. Cussen, Jarrett, and Cocker, Poultry Instructors, and Messrs. Cook, Wool Instructor, and Gorringe, Instructor in Swine Husbandry, have all been extremely busy answering the calls made for their services. The appointment of the two last-named officers has been more than justified by results, their services having been largely availed of for the purpose of lecturing and for practical advice. In the case of the Wool Instructor, practical demonstrations have been given in central shearing-sheds on the preparation of wool for the market, and instructional classes have also been held for returned soldiers.

DAIRY DIVISION.

REPORT OF THE DIVISIONAL DIRECTOR.

The Director-General.

Wellington, 12th May, 1921.

I HEREWITH transmit a report of the work of the Dairy Division for the year ended 31st March, 1921. Mr. D. Cuddie continued his work as Director until 18th June, 1920. Since that date I have been acting as Director, and desire to acknowledge the hearty co-operation of the officers of the Division in carrying on during the Director's absence.

W. M. SINGLETON, Acting-Director.

THE SEASON.

Throughout most of the dairying districts the year under review must be regarded on the whole as one of the most favourable experienced for some time. A mild summer in 1920 was responsible for a larger yield per cow for that period than is usually the case. In the Southland District this was followed by a mild winter, but in the North Island a succession of heavy frosts greatly retarded the growth of grass. This was unfavourable to dairy cows, and where supplementary feeds were scarce cows lost in condition to such an extent that many commenced the milking season when they were much too low in flesh to do themselves justice as producers. The spring months were not propitious. Grass grew but slowly, owing to cold inclement weather. The advent of summer, however, brought forth a great flush of grass. Dairy cows produced remarkably well; grass suitable for hay was in abundance; and during beautiful haymaking weather this was converted in large quantities into splendid fodder. The extra quantity and better quality of the hay so saved should augur well for improved conditions on dairy farms during the coming winter. The last two months of the period under review proved, in a number of districts, a period of anxiety for dairymen. Wellington Province has been dry, and Taranaki suffered considerably from lack of rain; North Auckland has been favoured more than other districts, and reports a splendid summer and autumn. For the Dominion generally, however, the dairying season must be regarded as good.

DIVERSION FROM CHEESE TO BUTTER MANUFACTURE.

During the autumn of 1920 the directors of a number of dairy companies, then making cheese, were of the opinion that throughout the current season it might be more profitable to manufacture butter. It was known that the world's production of butter was below pre-war quantities, and that the production of cheese had been favoured by comparative prices during the war period. In anticipation of making a change from cheese to butter, many dairy companies with buildings suitable for manufacturing either butter or cheese deemed it advisable to make such additions to their butter plant last winter as would enable a quick change-over to the manufacture of butter. During the spring the buoyancy of the cheese-market caused such dairy companies to continue making cheese. Later on, however, the advances on cheese to be consigned to the British market were reconsidered, and in some instances reduced. Inasmuch as companies manufacturing butter could obtain an advance of 90 per cent. of the value after fourteen days' storage, and the remaining 10 per cent. when the butter was f.o.b., and seeing also that the shipping of butter was experiencing less delay, many dairy companies decided to divert from cheese to butter manufacture. In December, January, and February, therefore, our dairy industry evidenced the most extensive change from the manufacture of one product to another that it has yet experienced. The majority of the large dairy companies in Taranaki changed their manufacture to butter either in whole or in part. The movement was also in force to a greater or lesser extent in the other dairying districts.