

APPENDICES.

APPENDIX I.—SETTLEMENT OF CROWN LANDS.

EXTRACTS FROM THE REPORTS OF THE COMMISSIONERS OF CROWN LANDS.

NORTH AUCKLAND.

(R. P. GREVILLE, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

Conditions and Progress of Settlement.—The past year has been a satisfactory one for the farmers. With an abundance of rain right through the season, and a mild winter, the result has been a luxuriant supply of grass. This tended to increase the output of butter and cheese and produce a record quantity of fat lambs. Following the depression of last year the rise in the prices of farm-produce put heart into the farmers, and the prospects of the settlers appear much brighter. When wool-prices had a tendency to rise at the same time as the price of butterfat was still on the decline, there was a movement amongst farmers to abandon dairying in favour of sheep, and this occurred on land which is purely dairying-country. Now that the butter-market has firmed these people are again reverting to dairying, the double change-over resulting in a certain loss. The tightness of the money-market and the preference shown by money-lenders to invest in city properties has had a detrimental effect on the development of the country, it being very difficult during the last two or three years to borrow money for improvements. It is anticipated that if prices remain firm confidence in country investments will be re-established.

The Dairying Industry.—The season 1922-23 has eclipsed that of the previous year in the production of butter and cheese. The season opened very well for the dairy-farmers as far as prices were concerned, but after a few months the market began to drop and became very unsettled. However, the season as a whole has given an average price for butterfat better than indications had one time promised. It is noticed that some of the factories are paying out 1s. 7½d. for the whole season; there is one as high as 1s. 8·17d.; other factories are not, however, doing so well.

It is interesting to note that the dairy cows in New Zealand at the present time reach the enormous number of 1,238,891; cattle, 3,475,448; horses, 331,922; sheep, 22,928,864; and pigs, 396,648.

It is pleasing to note that the importance of herd-testing is being widely recognized in New Zealand. Mr. A. C. Ross, of the Dairy Division, said recently that last year 81,471 cows were tested in New Zealand, this representing 7¼ per cent. of the total number of cows.

The following summary in regard to the London prices of butter and cheese is of special interest: "A cablegram from London received recently by the New Zealand Co-operative Dairy Company advised that the company's butter is quoted at 156s. per hundredweight, sales being made at that figure to the extent of several hundred boxes daily. Danish butter is reported at 142s. f.o.b., the price reacting from 136s. due to American buying. Mr. W. Goodfellow, managing director of the company, said it was further reported that the Maypole Dairy Company, the largest distributors of dairy-produce in the United Kingdom, had reduced the retail price of butter to 1s. 4d. per pound. It was expected that other stores would follow suit. He anticipated that the reduction in the price would stimulate the demand and bring about a quicker recovery. No substantial improvement in the market, however, was expected for several weeks. White and coloured cheese is reported to be selling at 86s. after a drop to 82s. The market is a fluctuating one with a downward tendency. Casein is quoted at £70 per ton, with a bare market, owing to an appreciable reduction in the American output. Good prices are anticipated for the coming season's output from New Zealand. Milk-powder sales are reported at £60 and £70 per ton, according to quality. Australia continues to buy moderate parcels of butter on the basis of 1s. 5d. and 1s. 6d. f.o.b. The wholesale price is being maintained in Sydney and Melbourne at 224s. per hundredweight."

There is a strong disposition among the dairy-farmers in our district to improve the standard of their herds. Of course this is a slow process and costs money. There is no doubt, however, that it is the only sure road to success for the dairy-farmer, who is more or less wasting his time milking a lot of indifferent cows.

A great many of our soldier farmers show a very low annual production of butterfat; others, however, are beginning to show very good figures. Where a man is managing his place well and putting energy into it, it is a good policy on the part of the Department to assist him to improve his dairy herd.

The Stock-market.—The prices of stock, with the exception of store cattle, have been on the whole satisfactory. Following the boom prices in 1919-20 of dairy cows and sheep, and the subsequent drop, the prices have now practically returned to normal. The lowest price for wether mutton on the London market was in August, but since that date a gradual rise has taken place, and at the end of March wethers were fetching up to 8¾d. and ewes up to 7d. Good prices for lambs