

and farmers would be well advised to cultivate ensilage to provide winter feed for their stock. The rainfall for the year was 112 in., and there were 1,970 hours of sunshine.

*Lime-works.*—The lime-works at Kowhitirangi and Ross are carrying on as usual, and the practice of top-dressing as against ploughing for the purpose of renewing worn-out pastures is becoming generally recognized and established.

*Timber.*—The total output of sawn timber for the year was 66,853,300 superficial ft., being a decrease of 6,284,600 ft. on the previous year's returns. Of this total 17,220,100 ft. was taken from freehold, 32,417,300 ft. from Crown land, and 17,215,900 ft. from State forests. Some 31,181,700 ft. passed through the Otira Tunnel. In addition to the sawn timber there was a fairly large output of posts, poles, sleepers, &c.

The quantity of timber exported for the year ended the 31st March, 1927, was 19,024,200 ft. The gross export was 2,471,700 ft. less than that of the previous year.

At the end of the financial year the timber trade was very dull, 50 per cent. of the mills being closed. The quantity of timber stacked on the skids amounted to 7,500,000 superficial ft.

*Flax.*—There are now four flax-mills in operation in Westland. They have all been working consistently, and the indications are that this valuable industry is on the increase.

*Revenue and Arrears.*—The total gross revenue for the year, including the Discharged Soldiers Settlement Account, amounted to £35,320. Land revenue amounted to £22,876, and arrears of rent to £1,493.

*Land Board.*—Twelve monthly meetings were held, as scheduled, during the year. The Board dealt with 177 applications for land, 127 transfers, 21 exchanges, 45 applications by returned men for advances, transfers, postponements, &c., and 51 timber licenses, together with the usual volume of miscellaneous work.

*Land open for Selection.*—An area of 239 acres was opened for selection by ballot during the year. Areas selected under various permanent tenures amounted to 5,649 acres.

*Land remaining for Selection.*—An area of 1,567 acres is now on hand, representing outstanding applications. No rural land at present is under survey, though an area of 107,761 acres, consisting of town, village-settlement, suburban rural lands, and pastoral runs, is open in the Land Guide. One hundred and twenty residential town sections at Taylorville and Rapahoe will shortly be offered for selection.

## CANTERBURY.

(W. STEWART, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

Climatic conditions have been favourable during the past season. A dry autumn allowed agricultural farmers almost full time at cultivation. The winter was mild and comparatively dry. The early part of spring was too dry, but the latter part was just the reverse; a few late cold snaps did some damage amongst late lambs, and in the northern district damaged some fruit and cereal crops. The summer has been rather dry, but has, over most of the district, been good ripening and harvesting weather, but too dry for rape.

Graziers have had a good year, as stock came through the winter well; the lambing has been good, except in a few isolated cases, where cold wet snaps caught some late flocks. Wool-clips have been heavier and sounder in staple than last year, and prices for wool, lamb, and mutton have all been steady and at a reasonable figure. The finishing-off has been more irregular this year than usual, on account of the cold wet spells in November and December, followed by a long dry period, which gave a very poor rape-yield. There is not as much feed for the winter as there was last year, as the turnip and swede crops are poor, and consequently store-sheep prices are falling.

Agriculturists have generally had a fair season, the lower prices for cereals being compensated by heavier yields. Many areas of oats intended for green feed were not required, owing to the abundance of winter feed everywhere, and were allowed to ripen. These have added to the surplus, so that many stacks will be held over till next year.

The dairy-farmers have not had a prosperous year. Cows came in well, but the late frosts cut away feed, and the January and February dry period parched the pastures earlier than usual. Prices, also, have not been as encouraging as previously. Many, however, have coupled pig-raising with dairying, and have thereby greatly improved their positions. Lincoln College has been advocating more of this, and has been conducting feeding experiments for the guidance of farmers. Herd-testing and culling is not receiving the attention necessary for best results.

The fruit-farmers and market-gardeners have not had a good year, as the climate has been against them. The season has been too short for crops such as outside tomatoes, a greater area of which was planted this season. Potato crops are not promising, as the season has been too dry.

Tree-planting conditions, which were relaxed during the war period, are being revived in the Mackenzie County runs and other runs where desirable. It is also intended to attempt again more frequent inspections of all classes of Crown leasehold, to ensure tenants complying with the conditions of their leases and licenses.

Tractors have increased considerably during the past year, being used on farms for cultivation, haulage, and threshing. There is no doubt these are a decided acquisition on certain properties, but I feel they are being purchased, in some cases, without sufficient justification. Where the Land Board controls accounts, change over from horses to tractor is allowed only when it can be shown to be a commercially sound proposition, and where the purchaser is able to find one-third of the cost himself.