

him from then onwards, and pests also seemed to be more numerous than usual. Many crops have therefore yielded much less than forecasts of January predicted, there is much under-grade wheat in the market, lambs did not fatten well or early, and clover heads did not fill well. Though prices, apart from lamb, mutton, and wool, are still too low for costs, this class as a whole have fared better than last year.

The dairymen have had a bad year. The shortage of winter feed had caused more dry feeding than usual, and the spring was late. The October rains were accompanied by cold weather, which was doubly hard on poor stock. There was ample feed throughout most of the milking season, which, however, did not compensate for the set-back during the early part of the milking year. But the hardest feature is the low price received, and the combination has given Canterbury dairying a particularly trying year. The Department is encouraging herd-testing to give a sounder basis for culling, but present prices are so low as to kill the enthusiasm necessary for carrying through such improved methods.

Small holders have also had a hard year, as competition has forced down prices for almost all the products of the small farm.

It was fortunate that so much hay and oat sheaf had been saved last season, as it was needed during the long winter cessation of growth. Lincoln College published a very useful bulletin giving advice on dry feeding, which must have been helpful to many farmers not used to this practice. The experience of the past season has again shown the need for more shelter plantations on nearly all classes of our holdings.

It is pleasing to record that, due to the combination of better prices in one of our main farming lines and a favourable season, arrears have been materially reduced.

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### OTAGO.

(N. C. KENSINGTON, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

The Otago District, with its large areas of pastoral country, has received the full benefit of the sharp rise in wool, which has been reflected in the good prices obtained for surplus stock. In addition, the excellent climatic conditions which prevailed produced abundance of feed, with the result that there is no fear of stock going short this winter.

In all parts of the district heavy rape and turnip crops are reported, and in North Otago the abnormal growth is far ahead of crops for many seasons past, as beneficial rains have been general in that part of the district since the new year. Unfortunately for the wheat crops, the early summer was dry and a set-back resulted, and, although revived by later rain, lighter crops were reported, and with the delayed harvest a good deal of damaged wheat is in evidence. Difficulty was also experienced in harvesting the pea crops in North Otago, and, although the potato crop is fair, blight has become apparent in some crops.

In Central Otago a late frost in the fruit-growing area had a disastrous effect; most fruit crops were entirely wiped out, consequently orchardists in the affected areas find themselves in a very difficult financial position, having in many cases booked the working-costs of the orchard against the anticipated yield.

The rabbit nuisance has been very apparent in nearly all parts of the district, the pest having increased during the past difficult years; but with the rise in the price of rabbit-skins it is anticipated that the increase will be stayed and the pest reduced to reasonable limits.

The difficult position of the dairy-farmer has been keenly felt in parts of South Otago, and the small mixed farmer in that part of the district is deserving of the fullest assistance that can reasonably be extended. With this exception, however, it can confidently be stated that the general rise in wool and lamb prices has had a very heartening effect on the majority of Crown tenants.

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### SOUTHLAND.

(B. C. McCABE, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

Favourable climatic conditions have been experienced throughout the district during the past season, and a splendid growth of pasture has been maintained throughout the growing season.

With the exception of a severe snowstorm in April, the run country experienced a favourable winter, and, except in isolated cases, no heavy losses of sheep were experienced.

A good lambing was experienced, and lambs have again fattened well.

The season has been too wet to suit grain-growing, and very few oats, in particular, will grade as firsts.

Large numbers of rabbits have been trapped for export, while fumigation and poisoning is now being carried out to an increasing extent, but up to the present little impression has been made on this pest, which is becoming an increasingly serious problem for Southland.

Dairymen have experienced a most disappointing season, as, although production has been satisfactory, the extremely low price received for butterfat has made the carrying-on of a dairy-farm extremely difficult.

On the other hand, sheep-farmers have experienced a very substantial rise in the value of their products, and this has been reflected in receipts on account of rent and interest, these items showing a large increase over receipts for each of the last two seasons.

Stock should go into the winter in first-class condition, and, although the turnip crop is not as satisfactory as usual, there should be ample feed available to carry the animals over until the spring growth commences.

Concessions have again been granted in many cases to help carry farmers over the difficulties they are facing, and it is evident that substantial assistance must still be given to farmers dependent entirely on dairying.