

## WELLINGTON.

(H. W. C. MACKINTOSH, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

On the whole, the year has been a favourable one for Crown tenants. Although there have been hot, dry spells, there have been breaks of two or three days of wet weather that in great measure saved pastures from drying up. In some parts of the district, however, notably in the northern Manawatu, the hot, dry weather was somewhat prolonged and had the effect of curtailing butterfat production and militated against the best results from cereal crops. Generally speaking, the winter was not too severe, and the majority of stock came through to spring in fair condition.

Most settlers now see the value of top-dressing their pastures, and more and more manure is being put on, with beneficial results.

With the guaranteed price for butterfat, dairy-farmers know where they stand, and can make up their budgets of income and expenditure with a degree of accuracy.

Wool-prices showed a decided drop, and this will no doubt be reflected in the working of pastoral areas.

Prices for stock have been maintained generally, but there has been a drop in the prices for breeding-ewes and store sheep in the last month or two.

It is pleasing to note that more tenants are giving attention to painting their homesteads, and also bringing their fences into a more efficient condition.

In addition to noxious weeds, the farmer has now two further pests to contend with: the white butterfly, and its more substantial co-destroyer the wild pig. The white-butterfly ravages in some parts have rendered crops of turnips, chou moellier, &c., practically useless for winter feed.

The wild pigs operate in the back country of the northern portion of the district, and are most destructive of young lambs. The settlers affected do their best to cope with the pigs by shooting, but there is so much cover that it is difficult to get at them.

In the Tangimoana Plantation, near the mouth of the Rangitikei River, the *pinus insignis* trees planted over an area of about 800 acres are doing well. The work of lopping the lower branches and the thinning of the trees is still proceeding. The fire risk due to the dry summer has been great, but fortunately no fires damaged the growing trees.

There has been a steady inquiry for land during the year, and any areas that would show a prompt return were readily selected.

## NELSON.

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

The 1937-38 season has been an exceptional one for all classes of farming. The winter was mild, and all stock came through in good condition.

Owing to the two months' very dry weather in the spring the hay crops were light, but farmers with stands of lucerne harvested some heavy crops. The growing of this fodder has increased considerably during the last few years.

Through favourable weather conditions the grain crops were harvested in splendid order, some wheat crops on areas of 40 acres and 50 acres averaged from 50 bushels to 53 bushels per acre.

Wool-prices were fairly good, although lower than last year.

All classes of stock are looking well, and good prices maintain for stores and fats.

## MARLBOROUGH.

(G. I. MARTIN, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

The season in Marlborough showed every indication during the spring and early summer of reverting to the drought conditions which obtained here a few years ago, but continued rains throughout February brought much needed relief, and, generally speaking, stock should now go into the winter in very fair condition. The drop in wool, following the promising outlook after last season's sales, was somewhat disconcerting, particularly to those who were endeavouring to make up leeway lost during the slump years by applying the surpluses gained during the previous year to the betterment of their properties.

Those engaged in agricultural farming have experienced a mixture of good and bad. Heavy yields have been experienced with wheat and barley on the better land, but peas and other crops which were sown in the spring have generally been low in yield.

Some very fair yields of clover should be obtained, but the area cut for this crop is likely to be less than last season owing to farmers having to avail themselves of their clover paddocks to feed their stock during the dry early summer.

To the dairy-farmer the February rains were more than welcome, as the danger of facing the winter with a shortage of feed was obviated.

Butterfat production during the season has shown a slight decrease on last season.

Returns from orchard properties will be down on last year, but still somewhat better than the average over the last ten years.