

## PASTURES AND CROPS.

### FEBRUARY.

OFFICERS of the Fields and Experimental Farms Division of the Department report as follows on the condition of the pastures and crops during the past month:—

**BAY OF ISLANDS.**—The weather continues in a state of drought, as it has been since October, and there seems no prospect of it breaking. It has had very disastrous results on live-stock, especially dairy herds, and the factory-suppliers are in consequence complaining of small cheques. Grass and bush fires are raging in many parts of the district, doing serious damage, and causing the winter outlook for live-stock to appear very gloomy, with the result that prices at the last monthly sale were considerably affected. Every settler in the district is praying fervently for the heavens to pour forth their watery blessings.—*W. J. Dunlop.*

**AUCKLAND.**—The February month, from every point of view, was all that could be desired. The fine warm weather experienced allowed the farmers time to harvest their crops in splendid condition. The dry weather, though retarding growth, was, at all events, of benefit in giving the land a spell for a time. When the late rains set in they very soon freshened up everything again. Grass, turnips, mangels, maize, and other crops benefited by the change. Stock of all descriptions are looking well. It is noticeable that the early-autumn-sown potatoes are strong and healthy. The root crops since the change set in promise to be good. The rainfall was much appreciated by the farmers. The dry weather was having a serious effect on the supply of milk for the factories.—*R. Rowan.*

**TE AROHA.**—The former part of the month was very dry, and pastures and root crops suffered. The last week was showery, which has done considerable good generally, but not enough rain has fallen to soak the land. However, at time of writing there are prospects of a good fall. Owing to the continuous drought the butter-fat output has fallen considerably. The showers experienced have given the root crops a start, and with a good rainfall they ought to be good, being practically free from disease and fly. Potatoes are very good generally.—*J. L. Morris.*

**CAMBRIDGE.**—Hot and muggy weather was the rule for the month, some days being very oppressive. Useful heavy rain-showers fell at intervals towards the end of the month, which did much to keep the grass fresh and green, and also benefited the swedes. The latter are looking particularly well just now, and a heavy turnip crop is almost assured. Hay and grain crops have been harvested in good order.—*A. A. Clapcott.*

**HAMILTON.**—Rain on the 6th of the month and again on two or three days towards the latter end, which, though not enough to saturate the ground, was sufficient to benefit the pastures and turnip crops. Root crops generally are looking well, and as there is every prospect of a good autumn growth of grass there should be a good supply of feed for the winter months.—*J. Kerr.*

**KING-COUNTRY.**—Beneficial rains fell last month, promoting a good growth in all root crops and freshening up the pastures, and should produce good results on newly sown burnt-bush areas. Tilling is now progressing favourably in the agricultural portions of the district, preparing the land for autumn sowings.—*B. Bayly.*

**NEW PLYMOUTH.**—The rainfall was above the average last month, consequently the pastures are looking very green, and feed is very plentiful. All root crops have made excellent growth.—*R. E. Fairfax-Cholmeley.*

**STRATFORD.**—A fine growing month—fine days interspersed with rain, which has had the effect of keeping pastures and crops fresh. Meadow hay and oaten hay have been well saved. Farmers are now starting to use their maize, and the milk-supply is keeping up well. Farmers who left the sowing of their turnips till late in the season have patchy crops, these being attacked by diamond-back moth. At present the prospects for winter feed are good.—*Austin F. Wilson.*