

Table 2, Changes in Apportionment of an Average 1,000 Acres of the Land occupied in the North Island between the Statistical Periods 1906 and 1911.

| North Island. | Carrying-capacity. | Ploughed Grass. | Surface-sown Grass. | Un-improved. | Cereals. | Roots, Forage, Crops, and Fallow. | Orchards and Plantations. |
|---------------------|--------------------|-----------------|---------------------|--------------|----------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| | Sheep. | Acres. | Acres. | Acres. | Acres. | Acres. | Acres. |
| 1,000 acres in 1911 | 1,550 | 110 | 440 | 424 | 8 | 15 | 3 |
| 1,000 acres in 1906 | 1,320 | 100 | 429 | 430 | 7 | 11 | 3 |

The central facts borne out by these figures are the paramount position of pasture and the almost negligible place of crops. That this is not merely a phase of development of the North Island is indicated by the fact that during the five-year statistical period the relative positions of grass and crops has remained practically unchanged. Down to the present time I have not been able to discover any general evidence of a turn in the tide. In fact, the effect on labour-supply of the Great War is certain to result in a still further reduction in our crop areas. These are facts with which we are all more or less familiar, but I for one, although knowing full well the importance of grass on the farm economy of the North Island, would hardly have credited an unsupported assertion that cropped areas constitute no more than, for example, $3\frac{1}{3}$ per cent. of the improved land of Taranaki. There are many who would consider this a state of things to be deplored, and to be remedied in the interests of the country with all possible speed. Is it or is it not bad? That is a question that it may be worth while to inquire into.

The first point to determine is the relative production of food for stock on pasture as compared with the food-production for stock on land under crop. Ordinary two-sheep pasture produces fodder at the rate of about 9 tons per annum. The same land under forage crops as ordinarily grown might produce an average of about twice that amount; and such an estimate certainly does not, all things considered, underestimate the degree of production under average circumstances. Granted that it is thus made possible to carry another two sheep per acre, the gross return therefrom will scarcely suffice to meet the expenses of growing even the cheapest of forage crops and leave a margin of profit.

To take concrete cases: At Moumahaki Experimental Farm a paddock of 7 acres 2 roods 15 perches seeded to oats and tares in May, 1915, carried live-stock up to the end of December,