

CLIMATOLOGICAL TABLE—continued

Summary of the Records of Temperature, Rainfall, and Sunshine for January 1956—continued

Table with columns: Station, Height of Station Above M.S.L., Air Temperatures in Degrees (Fahrenheit) [Means of, Mean of A and B, Difference From Normal, Absolute Maximum and Minimum], Rainfall in Inches [Total Fall, No. of Rain Days, Difference From Normal, Maximum Full], Bright Sunshine [Hrs.]. Includes stations like Darfield, Harewood, Christchurch, Wigram, Akaroa, Lincoln, Highbank, The Hermitage, Winchmore, Haast, Ashburton, Fairlie, Timaru, Adair, Tara Hills, Oamaru, Milford Sound, Waimate, Naseby, Frankton Airfield, Queenstown, Cromwell, Ophi, Earnscleugh, Waipiata, Alexandra, Manorburn Dam, Roxburgh Hydro, Mid Dome, Moa Flat, West Otago, Mossburn, Taieri, Musselburgh, Dunedin, Tapanui, East Gore, Gore, Otautau, Pebbly Hills, Invercargill South, Invercargill Airfield. Includes LATE RETURNS for Mt. Cook, Waipiata, and Roxburgh Hydro in Dec 1955.

NOTE.—At stations where departures from normal have an asterisk, the temperature record has been maintained for less than ten years, the rainfall record for less than twenty years. Rainfall normals have been revised and now refer to the standard period 1921–50. Where observations are not available for the whole period, or where the site of the rain gauge has been changed, the normals are partly interpolated.

NOTES ON THE WEATHER FOR JANUARY 1956

General: January was an exceptionally warm month. Drought conditions developed from Canterbury southwards following several months of low rainfall and warm temperatures, but good rains at the end of the month brought welcome relief to all but North Canterbury. Throughout the North Island conditions for stock were generally very good and milk production was at a high level. Stone fruits ripened early and in some places more quickly than the crops could be marketed.

A strong north-westerly gale on the 30th caused some minor damage in the vicinity of Cook Strait.

Rainfall: Rainfall was less than half the normal value over Gisborne and North Canterbury. Southland and Wai-kato also received somewhat less than the normal rainfall.

It was wetter than usual in Northland, Wellington, and the Marlborough Sounds; many districts in these areas received more than twice their normal rainfall. An exceptionally high total of 33 inches was recorded at Tuna Bay in the Marlborough Sounds.

Temperatures: Temperatures everywhere were far above normal. For the country as a whole there has not hitherto been a warmer month, with the possible exception of February 1938. For the South Island alone it was easily the warmest month on record, the departure being as much as 6° to 8°F. in Canterbury and Otago.

In the period from the 15th to the 24th some exceptionally high maximum temperatures were recorded in eastern districts of both Islands. The temperature of 101°F. at Ashburton on the 19th was the highest temperature ever officially recorded in this country; the previous highest was 100°F. at Lincoln College in 1921. A new record was established for the North Island with a temperature of 100°F. at Gisborne on the 22nd.

Sunshine: Sunshine was below normal over the North Island and northern districts of the South Island. North of Wanganui the deficiency ranged from 70 to over 120 hours. For Rotorua, with a total of only 116 hours, it was by far the cloudiest January in 48 years of record.

The remainder of the South Island was favoured with more sunshine than usual and south of Christchurch departures were mainly above 40 hours. Invercargill had the unusual distinction of being one of the sunniest places in the country—the total of 250 hours was the highest recorded there in any month in over 40 years of record.

Weather Sequence: At the beginning of the month an anti-cyclone was centred to the east of Cook Strait, while a complex depression covered the Tasman Sea. The strong north-easterly winds and showery weather which had been affecting Northland and the Bay of Plenty at the end of 1955 persisted, but elsewhere the weather was fair at first. The main centre of the depression moved to the south but, with the passage of two associated troughs slowly eastwards across the country, conditions became generally unsettled from the 2nd to the 6th, although no rain fell in eastern districts north of Dunedin. On the 7th barometers rose in the south and the weather cleared as far north as Greymouth. However, the second trough remained active for another three days over the North Island with the formation of a small depression. Some heavy rain was reported in the Auckland Province and also about Cook Strait, but conditions improved during the 9th.

For the next four days fine weather prevailed over most of the country under the influence of an anticyclone centred east of the South Island. However, pressure remained low to the north-west, and fresh easterly winds were again experienced over Northland with further unsettled weather. On the 12th thunderstorms with heavy rain were reported from the Bay of Islands northward.

From the 14th to the 24th pressures remained comparatively high over the country, especially in the north, but the passage of three weak troughs caused rain at times on the West Coast. Some light falls were also reported on the 17th about Cook Strait, and on the 21st and 22nd in parts of Otago and Southland. During this period eastern districts from Gisborne to Invercargill reported many exceptionally hot days.