

NOTES ON THE WEATHER FOR JULY 1974

General—This was one of the wettest Julys on record and also one of the mildest. It was a cloudy month and was notable for frequent strong winds from a westerly quarter over the North Island. Growth was mainly quite good for the time of the year, but many farmers found conditions too wet, affecting the health of stock. Lambing commenced in the North Island under rather variable conditions.

Rainfall—Rainfall was above normal over most of the country. It was more than double the normal value in western districts from Kawhia to Wellington, over most of Otago and south-eastern Southland, and in parts of Nelson and the Marlborough Sounds. Stratford Mountain House received 1573 mm, one of the highest monthly totals ever recorded in New Zealand. Southern and western districts of the North Island had considerable falls on the 2nd, 3rd, and 17th, with local flooding and the development of many slips. In Otago the wettest period was from the 28th to the 30th, and parts of North Otago received as much as 170 mm on these 3 days. Many Otago rivers were in flood on the 30th, including the Taieri and Tokomairiro; and extensive dislocation of road and rail traffic both north and south of Dunedin was reported.

Temperatures—Temperatures were above normal over the whole country, mainly by 1½°C. Departures were higher over the North Island than over the South Island. Rotorua had its mildest July on record, equal with 1949, in many years of observation. The coldest spells were from the 3rd to the 6th; and also, mainly in the South Island, from the 9th to the 11th. During both of these periods snow was reported to low levels in the South Island and on the high country of the North Island.

Sunshine—Sunshine was below normal by up to 60 hours over the greater part of the country, largest deficiencies being from Bay of Plenty to Waikato, Waitomo, and Taupo. However, South Westland had 30 hours above normal; and most areas near the east coast of both Islands had totals close to normal. Sunshine was also about normal in central Northland.

Weather Sequence—At the beginning of July a complex trough lay across New Zealand with one depression centred west of Auckland and another to the south of Southland. At first there was only scattered rain, but on the 2nd there were considerable falls over the North Island and the northern part of the South Island. On the following day the northern depression moved slowly south-eastward and the other one slowly eastward, while the trough moved north-eastward; and an anticyclone was centred far to the south-west. Conditions remained somewhat similar but the belt of heaviest rain moved northward from the area of Cook Strait to the Egmont-Wanganui-National Park area. Flooding affected many areas, especially the Wairarapa, and many slips were also reported. Temperatures became much colder, and snow was reported to low levels in the South Island and on the high country of the North Island. On the 4th the northern depression lay just east of Auckland, while the southern one was far to the south-east. Rain became lighter and affected mainly eastern districts in the southerlies. The

anticyclone moved towards Campbell Island while pressures remained low for another 2 days east of the North Island. Southerlies persisted with rain mainly east of the ranges from Christchurch to East Cape. A brief, temporary improvement occurred on the 7th with the passage of a long narrow ridge across the country, but some showers were still reported.

On the 8th a depression over the Central Tasman Sea was moving eastward and rain once again covered nearly the whole of the North Island, besides northern and some western districts of the South Island. However, temperatures became milder. During the two following days one centre moved to the east of the South Island while another remained to the west. Rain became general, and temperatures again became cold in the south with snow to low levels. From the 11th to the 13th south-westerlies predominated with clearing weather over most of the South Island.

Conditions became more westerly on the 14th with milder temperatures. Pressures were very low far to the south and a small depression was also passing to the north. Rain was reported in western districts of both islands and in Southland, with similar conditions persisting on the following day. During the 16th and 17th a trough became stationary over the North Island with the formation of a small depression. Considerable rain once again affected most of the North Island and the northern part of the South Island.

On the 18th a deep depression was centred to the south of Tasmania and during this and the following day it moved eastward while the associated trough of low pressure crossed New Zealand with general rain west of the ranges. Temperatures remained rather mild. These westerly conditions persisted also from the 20th to the 24th with a similar distribution of rainfall. Gales were reported in many districts from the 21st to the 23rd, and also heavy seas.

On the 25th a small depression formed on a trough during its passage over the country. With pressures rising rapidly to the south, winds soon changed to colder southerlies to south-westerlies, and rain became general. Pressures remained low to the east on the following day and there was a clearance over the South Island. On the 27th a complex depression over the Tasman Sea commenced to affect New Zealand, causing rain west of the ranges. On the following day, with the passage of a small centre across the North Island rain became general. The complex depression crossed New Zealand during the 29th and 30th with the main centre across the South Island and a smaller centre across Northland. Pressures were high to the west of Campbell Island. Rain became general again except east of the ranges north of Timaru. On the 30th there were some heavy falls in South Canterbury and Otago, with flooding in the Taieri and Tokomairiro Rivers. On this day the rain cleared over most of the southern half of the North Island and the northern half of the South Island. On the last day of the month conditions remained somewhat similar. The whole system was losing intensity and the rain was becoming lighter.

J. F. DE LISLE, Director.

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