

1942.

NEW ZEALAND.

NATIVE LAND DEVELOPMENT AND THE PROVISION OF HOUSES FOR MAORIS, INCLUDING EMPLOYMENT PROMOTION.

REPORT ON—BY BOARD OF NATIVE AFFAIRS.

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Leave.

GENERAL REPORT.

THIS report, dealing with the operations of the Board of Native Affairs during the financial year ended 31st March, 1942, provides a summary of the principal activities undertaken throughout the year in connection with the development, settlement, and farming of Native land and measures taken for improving the housing conditions of the Maori people. For purposes of economy there has been omitted repetition of facts that can conveniently be obtained by reference to previous statements on these subjects presented to both Houses of the General Assembly during the past eleven years.

The satisfactory progress maintained during the past decade in the Native-land-settlement enterprises controlled by the Board is due in a very large measure to the sustained energies of the Maori people concerned, the majority of whom are now achieving a successful standard of efficiency in farming and, encouraged by their leaders, are making an appreciable contribution to the primary production output of the Dominion. The policy of the Board is the settlement of the Maoris to the limit of their remaining land resources, in circumstances that will secure for them a reasonable standard of livelihood as farming members of the community, and the Board realizes that this objective is only possible with the co-operation and assistance of the elders and the leaders.

A most satisfactory feature of this year's operations is revealed in the figures relating to the sale of dairy-produce and the returns from the sheep and cattle farming activities controlled by the Board, which resulted in revenue receipts amounting to over half a million pounds, the exact amount being £575,752, as compared with a total return of £547,516 for the preceding year. The steady upward trend year by year has thus continued, despite the fact that war conditions have handicapped farming operations generally.

The principal items of production from State schemes controlled by the Board are as follows: Butterfat, representing the Department's proportion only, which averaged 40 per cent., £176,743, as compared with £169,660 for the previous season; wool-sales, £76,802, as against £79,274 for 1941; proceeds from sheep and cattle sold, £214,140, in comparison with £200,504 for the previous year; and sundry receipts (crops and other farm produce), £34,578, the previous year's figures being £28,657. The volume of dairy-produce has decreased slightly from 6,123,888 lb. to 6,067,433 lb., while the wool-clip shows a marked increase from 4,663 bales to 5,426 bales. The seventeen stations financed by the Native Trustee and the Maori Land Boards produced a total of 2,164 bales of wool of a gross value of £35,784, as compared with 1,853 bales (£32,940) for the preceding year; sales of live-stock on these properties reached £36,672, in comparison with £35,567 for 1941; while on the East Coast Trust stations 2,765 (2,369) bales of wool were shorn.

The live-stock returns at the 31st March last are reflected in the volume of production for the year under review in respect of dairying and sheep-farming operations controlled by the Board, and show an increase in practically all classes. The tallies, with the preceding year's figures shown in parentheses, on the farm-development schemes financed by the State are as follows: Cows milked during the season, 40,000 (37,950); other dairy stock, 24,000 (21,000); run cattle, 27,600 (27,500); breeding-ewes, 155,500 (136,300); dry sheep, 111,000 (114,600). The Native Trust and Maori Land Board stations, which derive their finance from Trust funds, were also carrying 10,900 (7,450) run cattle, 40,500 (39,200) breeding-ewes, and 41,200 (34,000) dry sheep. In addition, the East Coast Trust stations carry flocks totalling 143,000 sheep and nearly 18,500 head of cattle.

The vagaries of the weather experienced throughout the North Island were generally unfavourable for farming. Following a good late autumn the winter was severe in North Auckland but mild in the Waikato, and during the spring the rainfall was excessive. Drought conditions which prevailed in the autumn were unfavourable for dairying, although production was maintained in the north. In the Rotorua and Bay of Plenty areas the dry autumn spell affected butterfat returns, but welcome rainfalls which followed have improved pastures and a good growth of winter feed is assured for stock purposes. Parts of the East Coast district experienced a good season and stock has been healthy, but in the Waiapu area shortage of winter feed is anticipated due to the dry autumn. Hawke's Bay suffered from an exceptional dry spring and early summer, followed by excessive rainfall which affected harvesting but which will be beneficial for wintering stock. A wet season in Wanganui and Taranaki districts delayed shearing and other stock-work and affected the feeding-value of grass. Climatic conditions in the South Island were variable.