

been experienced on account of a dry autumn, and winter feed in some cases will again be a problem. Stock has been healthy and losses few, and a better percentage of fats has been sent to the works.

Departmental schemes in the Bay of Plenty and Rotorua districts have absorbed the bulk of the store stock and aged ewes. Excepting for sires, the time is approaching when little buying will be required outside of the Department's own resources.

Natural increases of sheep have improved, Uruahi Station having obtained 100 per cent., which is an unusual occurrence on the coast. Fat stock off this station comprised 106 cattle and 825 lambs.

Excepting in the Waiapu district, herd-testing is not yet a large enough feature. An essential complement to testing is an adequate supply of heifers, and much remains to be learned in the rearing of calves. To offset this in the southern area, some 100-odd weaners have been purchased from the Manawatu and are being grazed on newly-developed land on Mahia.

Winter feed has received much better attention, and there is a satisfactory increase in the saving of hay in both northern and southern areas. In the latter area some eight barns have been constructed by Native labour. The quality of hay saved has been facilitated by a contract let to the owner of a power press.

Noxious weeds are not a severe menace throughout the district, but in the south goats have to be used extensively to keep in check the prolific growth of blackberry which became established in days prior to development.

Tairarawhiti District was once endowed with an abundance of fencing and building timber, but now many settlers have to import requirements from long distances. Emphasis has therefore been placed on the necessity to repair the loss by vigorous planting of exotics. It is pleasing, mainly on stations, to find healthy strong plantations flourishing, particularly in the waste corners which are to be found on most farms.

The building programme has made steady progress. On development, sixteen houses, six cow-sheds, one wool-shed, one maize-crib, and four pig layouts have been built, while substantial additions have been made to two cow-sheds and five dwellings. This progress, following on from that made in previous years, is contributing much to a changed outlook and improved health amongst the Native people.

The Tairarawhiti District Maori Land Board administers one station—Anaura—of some 5,865 acres, and in July is to take over the Waiorongomai Block of 13,000 acres at Ruatoria on behalf of the beneficial owners. In addition to these activities, the Board also supervises thirty-four mortgaged properties which this year have produced 294 bales of wool, 66,342 lb. butterfat, and a surplus of some 3,327 sheep and 284 cattle. The total mortgages number 94, with a gross liability of £58,323 at 31st March, 1942.

The Native Trust stations, which previously numbered seven, have now been increased to twelve, making a total of 27,000 acres. Four of these are situated at Te Araroa and one at Ruatoria. All these places were in a neglected condition, but with flocks and herds culled under active supervision and the provision of fencing to control stock these pastoral lands will soon be making a substantial contribution to increased production.

The Department is pleased to note the establishment of three secondary-school departments attached to Native schools at Ruatoria, Tikitiki, and Te Araroa. This extra schooling, particularly in the manual section, should mean much in the training of new farmers.

Native Housing.—Steady progress has been maintained with the housing programme during the past year, and nearly all the building activities in the district have been carried out by Maori gangs under the control of six master carpenters, one painter, and two plumbers, all of which are under the supervision of the Public Works Department. It is a pleasure to observe from various inspections that these houses are being cared for, which shows that the occupants thoroughly appreciate what is being done for them.

The following is the position of the housing operations as at the 31st March, 1942: Authorizations under the Native Housing Act for erections, purchases, and renovations totalled £46,332, covering 100 applications. Out of this number, sixteen houses have been completed during the year and two are in the course of construction. From the Special Housing Fund an amount of £26,488 has been approved, the dwellings completed during the year numbering ten, with three in progress.

AOTEA MAORI LAND BOARD DISTRICT.

Although conditions arising from the present world conflict have of necessity restricted many of our departmental activities, it is pleasing to report that there has been no diminution of interest in our various undertakings. Staffing difficulties and lack of labour have brought their problems, but co-operation and improvisation have enabled progress to continue.

Climatic conditions during the season were not of the best. From early spring until autumn rain fell at short intervals in most localities. While dairy-production was thus maintained, the feeding-value of the pasture was not proportionate to the growth, due to lack of sunshine. Shearing and other stock work was consequently delayed and stock suffered accordingly. While lambing percentages were normal, hoggets did not thrive under the wet conditions, and in the Manunui and Ranana areas losses were above normal.

Fat stock in general did not kill out as heavily as usual, but the buoyant nature of the market more than offset this factor. Wool, though lighter in condition, realized satisfactory prices.

The reduction in fertilizer-supplies has not been seriously felt in established pastures which have retained the benefit of former applications, but careful stocking has been necessary in newer pastures and on light country.

Development work generally has been restricted to the consolidation of areas already brought in.