

The weather factor also brought about a poor season for hay, although a considerable quantity was baled. However, the stock position is very favourable, due to the flush of feed throughout the season caused by the general rains at the beginning of the present year. The stock are all going into the winter in excellent condition, and the present prospects show that there will be ample feed to carry them over this period.

In the Manawatu district, which is confined to dairying, there was a very hard winter which has brought about a noticeable increase in the growth of rubbish on the low-lying and swampy ground. However, despite the winter setback, the late spring returns increased considerably, with the result that the butterfat return for the season was on the average considerably better than the previous year. At Wairau, where the Native land development scheme is administered by the Commissioner of Crown Lands at Blenheim, a very good yield was obtained from white-clover seed.

Also on this scheme 178 acres were planted in linen flax, which resulted in a commercial crop of 165 acres.

No major capital works were carried out during 1941-42 due to the restricted supply of materials and the shortage of labour.

During the year, and until such time as the position regarding labour and materials becomes normal, efforts will be centred on consolidating and maintaining the stage of development which has been reached.

During the twelve months under review a total of twenty houses were erected or renovated, while two were purchased in the Ikaroa district, and in the South Island four houses were erected or renovated. The activities of the Department in attempting to improve the living conditions of the Maoris in this district have been greatly hampered by the shortage of materials and the dearth of Native labour due to the abnormal conditions at present existing. A large number of the Maoris is in the forces. Others prefer to find more remunerative work, of which there is an abundance at the present time.

NATIVE TRUST AND MAORI LAND BOARD ACTIVITIES.

The Board of Native Affairs exercises control over the expenditure on all farming operations undertaken or approved by the Native Trustee or a Maori Land Board, and over the development of any land and the management of any scheme or undertaking in connection with which any such expenditure has been made or incurred by these bodies. Similarly, the Board controls the investment on mortgage or otherwise of moneys available for investment in the Native Trustee's Account or in the account of any Maori Land Board.

The Native Trustee is undertaking the farming operations on fifteen separate sheep and cattle stations, aggregating some 50,000 acres, of which four new properties in the Te Araroa district and one near Ruatoria became vested under section 25 of the Native Trustee Act, 1930, during the past year. The improvements on these latter properties were in a poor state of repair, and renovations are being proceeded with. The other remaining stations are all now well equipped with buildings and other improvements necessary for the farming of the areas. They are fully stocked with sheep and cattle and are now in a position to breed their own requirements. The live-stock tallies at the 31st March last were as follows: 9,167 run cattle, 29,584 breeding-ewes, and 28,375 dry sheep.

In addition to the above station properties, the field organization of the Department is responsible for the supervision of mortgaged lands and Native estates in respect of which the Native Trustee has been appointed administrator or trustee. At the 31st March, 1942, there were 372 loan accounts covering investments, mostly farming propositions, totalling £391,206.

The two Maori Land Board stations—Anaura, farmed by the Tairarawhiti Board, and Morikau, vested in the Aotea Board—are being successfully managed, and according to the returns have experienced a satisfactory year.

Farming operations on Anaura, comprising 5,865 acres situated on the East Coast, have been carried on similarly to preceding years, adhering very much to the plan of breeding both in sheep and cattle, and selling off the surplus stock, for which the market has been very good. The natural increase was just about on a par with last season in both sheep and cattle—viz., calves, 319, as against 320 last year, and lambs, 3,538, as against 3,680 in 1940-41. The wool-clip of 213 bales, as compared with 197 bales for the previous year, has definitely improved both in quality and weight, and with careful selection of rams should not deteriorate. The quality of the cattle has also improved, the herd now being up to a good standard. The season has been very dry, the rainfall being much below the average, and the country at the moment is very short of cattle feed. However, provided an ordinary winter is experienced, there should be no fears of carrying through the present numbers. Maintenance work in connection with fencing repairs has continued, and some 500 acres have been cleared of scrub. The work of plowing and sowing the flats in grass is steadily proceeding, and it is intended to continue with this method of improvement in small areas annually. At 31st March, 1942, the station was carrying 1,112 run cattle, 5,238 breeding-ewes, and 2,729 dry sheep.