

ordinary working-hours. Such additional time is paid for at the usual hourly rate. Drivers (horse, lorry, or tractor) and stockmen are engaged on a weekly rate basis, the former working a 42½-hour week and the latter having no fixed hours.

The occupiers are not subject to the agreement, and are on call for the full seven-day week. They are paid a weekly wage, and a deduction is made for house rental. They are given additional annual holidays in lieu of statutory holidays worked during the year.

The occupiers fall into two main groups:—

- (a) Those who are engaged on essentially grazing properties and who are to all intent and purpose farm hands:
- (b) Those who are milking herds and who work for a minimum wage plus a bonus on production. The essential features of the scheme are—
 - (1) The occupier is given a specified area and a herd varying from thirty to forty cows;
 - (2) He is required to do all seasonal work, including harvesting and top-dressing;
 - (3) He is paid a wage, from which a deduction is made for house rental; and
 - (4) A bonus is paid on the following basis: 25 per cent. of the value of all butterfat produced in excess of 6,000 lb. for the season; 50 per cent. of the proceeds of all pigs-sales in excess of £1 10s. per cow milked; in respect of calves reared, 5s. for each first-class calf, 4s. for each second-class calf, and 2s. 6d. for each third-class calf.

The Committee considers that, while the existing terms and conditions are quite satisfactory so far as straight-out development work is concerned, there is room for some variation when men are engaged solely on seasonal farming operations which gradually become a function as the land is developed and cropping and stocking become necessary.

There is a distinction between development and seasonal operations, and this distinction is not only present on blocks being developed by the Crown, as private farmers engage a considerable amount of outside labour to carry out new development work. The Committee therefore considers that fresh terms and conditions should be made applicable to men engaged solely on seasonal or farming operations, and the following is suggested:—

- (a) Men engaged on roading, bridging, draining, clearing, stumping, logging, fencing, and other kindred work should continue to work under the existing agreement:
- (b) New terms and conditions should apply to men engaged on actual farming operations such as cultivation, top-dressing, sowing, maintenance work generally, harvesting, and care of stock.

Work of the nature under (b) cannot be carried out on a forty-hour-week basis between Mondays and Fridays, and is very often dependent upon favourable weather conditions. While it is not suggested that men on seasonal or farming work should be asked to work unlimited hours, it is reasonable that they should be on call when required for any urgent seasonal work, and there should be no difficulty in varying the existing agreement to allow of more elasticity so far as seasonal and farming work are concerned.

With regard to the men who are selected as occupiers, the present system appears to be working satisfactorily, and no change is suggested.

The successful development of land depends to a large degree on the efficiency of the men employed on the work. In the past, land-development schemes have been used as an avenue to absorb unemployed labour, which for the most part was unskilled and not suited to the work. The use of this unskilled labour has undoubtedly increased costs, and it is recommended that in future some method be evolved under which the Department will have the right to choose its own men. If at the end of a limited period any man has shown he is unsuitable to the work, then his employment should be terminated.

FARM FORESTRY.

On all development schemes there is a heavy demand for fencing-timber and timber for ordinary farm use, and this demand will always be present for future maintenance of fences. At the present time posts are both scarce and costly. It was noted that particularly in the King-country there were few plantations of exotic trees, although those that were seen were doing remarkably well. The absence of plantations is no doubt partly due to the high risk of fire in a district where burning off of fern is an important part of the routine of husbandry. As the fern becomes replaced by permanent pasture the fire hazard will diminish, and the Committee is of the opinion that the Department should establish plantations for the express purpose of providing fencing-timber in each locality to avoid in future the heavy costs now incurred. Eucalypts of various kinds appear to thrive in this district, and one specimen of *Eucalyptus macarthuri* was seen which at twelve years old was 18 in. in diameter. Areas within a development block not suitable for grassing could without doubt be advantageously planted in trees. This latter work should be undertaken by the Lands and Survey Department as part of the development operations.

PHOSPHATIC FERTILIZER.

An outstanding feature of the investigations has been the fact that the successful development of the lands being handled is wholly dependent upon the availability and use of phosphatic fertilizer.

The establishment and maintenance of grass on the hill country in the central North Island district, on the pumice lands of the Rotorua district, and on the gum lands of North Auckland under the existing farming practice are effective only by the liberal use of artificial fertilizer when the pasture is sown and by liberal subsequent top-dressing. In view of the present rationing of phosphatic fertilizer, it will readily be seen that