

1943
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

IN continuation of previous statements presented to both Houses of the General Assembly during the last twelve years, the Board of Native Affairs submits its annual report on the development, settlement, and farming of Native lands, and subsidiary activities undertaken for the betterment of the Maori people.

War conditions, and an adverse season experienced in many parts of the North Island, have affected farming operations, and the shortage of man-power and the limited supply of fertilizers are factors which have precluded the extension of land-development activities to any appreciable extent. Nevertheless, throughout the year every endeavour has been made to maintain the Board's present farming enterprises and to stimulate production.

Although climatic conditions generally throughout New Zealand during the year were satisfactory for agriculture, the vagaries of the weather experienced in some districts were distinctly unfavourable for dairying. In North Auckland a cold spring followed by an abnormally dry summer and autumn affected butterfat-production; in the Waikato a very dry summer was also recorded, but the season was more favourable for grazing; lambing percentages were good in the Bay of Plenty following a mild winter, but the paucity of rain in the summer affected dairying; parts of the East Coast suffered from drought conditions from August onwards, but the pastures recovered in the late autumn; the prolonged dry weather, which extended to the Wanganui district, was reflected in the decreased butterfat returns, but welcome rains fell in March; pasture growth was better in the Manawatu, but in the Hawke's Bay and Wairarapa areas there was a serious shortage of feed owing to the scarcity of rain. Crops in the South Island were reasonably good and the prospects for winter feed are satisfactory.

Notwithstanding unfavourable seasonal conditions in many districts, the farming returns for 1942-43 were the highest yet recorded, and amounted to £617,442, as compared with £575,752 for the previous year. A decline of over 6½ per cent. in butterfat-production was more than offset by the 15 per cent. increase in wool-prices and the higher returns realized from the sale of fat stock. Including the proportion of cream returns paid direct to the settlers, the total revenue for the year amounted to £830,000, an increase of £35,000 over the figures for the preceding period.

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., £165,268, as compared with £176,743 for the previous season; wool-sales, £92,770, as against £76,802 for 1942; proceeds from sheep and cattle sold, £240,073, in comparison with £214,140 for the previous year; and sundry receipts (crops and other farm produce), £36,883, the previous year's figures being £34,578. The volume of dairy-produce decreased from 6,067,433 lb. to 5,652,695 lb., while the wool-clip of 5,315 bales showed a slight decrease as compared with 5,426 bales for the 1942 season. The eighteen stations financed by the Native Trustee and the Maori Land Boards produced a total of 2,123 bales of wool of a gross value of £37,725, as compared with 2,164 bales (£35,784) for the preceding year; sales of live-stock on these properties reached £38,379, in comparison with £36,672 for 1942. On the East Coast Trust stations 3,471 bales of wool were shorn, the previous year's clip being 2,765 bales.

The live-stock returns at the 31st March last show an increase in practically all classes over the 1942 figures. The tallies, with the preceding year's figures shown in parentheses, on the farming schemes financed by the State were as follows: Cows milked during the season, 40,500 (40,000); other dairy stock, 25,200 (24,000); run cattle, 30,500 (27,600); breeding-ewes, 159,300 (155,500); dry sheep, 121,500 (111,000). The sixteen Native Trust stations were carrying 8,615 (9,160) run cattle, 31,000 (29,500) breeding-ewes, and 38,090 (28,300) dry sheep; while the figures for two Maori Land Board stations were 1,785 (1,802) run cattle, 13,200 (10,900) breeding-ewes, and 10,000 (12,800) dry sheep. The Trust and Board properties derive their finance from trust funds.