

STATE DEVELOPMENT SCHEMES

TOKERAU MAORI LAND BOARD DISTRICT

The North Auckland district covers the entire peninsula north of Auckland and is divided for control purposes into sub-districts covering individual unit schemes—namely, Mangonui, Hokianga, Bay of Islands, and Kaipara. Individual Native farms financed by the Department number 835, while in addition the Department operates 16 large comprehensive schemes or stations. The majority of these general schemes are suitable for close settlement and will be subdivided at an opportune time.

A marked decrease is shown in dairy-production figures during the year. The abnormal dry spell accounts in the main for this reduction. The climatic conditions have been most unfavourable. Cattle came into the winter in good condition, but bitterly cold winds prevailed until October, which was a mild month. Since November very little rain has fallen. Experienced settlers state the abnormally dry spell since November has been the worst experienced in twenty-two years. In many instances, cows dried off in January and February. In some cases hay was being fed out to stock as early as March. The present prospects of a successful year next season are unfavourable. In addition to dry weather, numerous bush and peat fires have taken toll of many acres of grass land. Lack of labour has also added to the difficulties. A large number of our unit farmers have joined the Colours, and this has imposed a heavy burden on the womenfolk, who are doing their best to maintain the farms during their absence. Another reason for the acute labour shortage is the fact that a large number of workers prefer to accept the more remunerative temporary work which is freely offering in the district.

With the limitation in man-power and farming requisites, very little new development work has been undertaken. The main effort has been directed towards maintaining improvements already effected. Employment-promotion grants decreased during the year. Assistance was extended to a monthly average of 315 workmen, to which the Fund contributed £26,772, a decrease of £25,400 on the previous year.

The reduction of fertilizer-supplies is now being felt on established pastures. The greatly reduced quantity of manure available is being utilized where required most urgently.

Wool-production this year totals 390 bales, which is an increase of 41 bales on last year's total of 349 bales.

Brief particulars summing up the main features are as follows:—

Area gazetted	..	..	..	..	463,443 acres.
Area developed and occupied by settlers	..	..	..	..	87,546 acres.
Areas grassed on schemes or stations	..	..	..	..	13,152 acres.
Number of unit farmers	..	..	..	..	835
Live-stock carried on all properties	..	..	..	..	25,870 dairy cattle. 3,540 run cattle. 19,000 sheep.

Native Housing.—Building operations have been greatly curtailed owing to necessary materials and key labour being required for defence purposes. However, thirteen houses have been erected during the year, and as soon as the supply position has eased, this aspect of the Department's activities will receive its due consideration. It is to be noted that the demand for housing assistance is still keen.

Housing repayments in both the Tokerau and Waikato districts are on the whole satisfactory, although some difficulty has arisen in cases where the Department is relying for instalments on assignments of wages. It is found that workmen are inclined to move from one place of employment to another, and it is difficult in these cases to keep repayments up to date.

WAIKATO-MANIPOTO MAORI LAND BOARD DISTRICT

This district embraces the Waikato, Hauraki, Coromandel, and King-country areas and is known as the South Auckland district.

Satisfactory progress has been made notwithstanding adverse weather conditions, shortage of fertilizers, and other farming requisites.

The total area gazetted is 66,525 acres, of which 31,570 acres have been developed and occupied by 236 Native settlers. The balance area includes 24,273 acres of farmable lands, of which 12,210 acres are in grass. This balance area is directly administered by the Department under seventeen comprehensive schemes or stations, many of which, as a matter of general policy, will later be subdivided into suitable areas for closer settlement by Native farmers. Close supervision of both unit and scheme activities has been maintained and much good work has been accomplished, particularly in efforts to increase production.

Although climatic conditions generally during the late summer were unfavourable (very dry conditions prevailed during January, February, and March), the butterfat output has not decreased to any great extent. The year has been more favourable for sheep-grazing, and this is reflected by the large wool-clip, which shows only a slight decrease of 7 bales on the output of 889 bales for the previous year.

Suitable labour on both unit and comprehensive schemes has been scarce and only sufficient workers have been available to cope with maintenance work. Owing to limited man-power being available, work has been concentrated on improving existing cleared areas, and little or no new development work has been undertaken during the year. The employment-promotion subsidy towards the Department's schemes during the current year totalled £20,462, a decrease of £8,500 on the amount granted last year. The expenditure of this grant gave work to a monthly average of 173 workmen.