

Four nominations have been submitted for the annual competition for the Ahuwhenua Trophy, while during the year the winner of the previous year's competition—a member of the Maniapoto tribe farming near Te Kuiti—was presented with the trophy with due ceremony.

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

Area gazetted	..	..	..	..	..	66,525 acres.
Area developed and occupied by settlers	..	..	..	..	..	31,570 acres.
Area in grass on comprehensive schemes	..	..	..	..	..	12,210 acres.
Number of unit farmers	..	..	..	..	..	236
Number of comprehensive schemes or stations	..	..	..	..	..	17
Dairy cows	..	..	..	..	..	8,800
Run cattle	..	..	..	..	..	4,300
Sheep	..	..	..	..	..	47,000

Native Housing.—Housing generally in this district is reasonably good as far as the majority of Native settlers under the Department's control are concerned. Since the inception, 182 cottages have been erected on unit and scheme properties, while the number of dwellings erected, renovated, or purchased under the Native Housing Act during the year was 10. A considerable number of applications are awaiting attention when the restrictions on building and the man-power position is less acute.

WAIARIKI MAORI LAND BOARD DISTRICT

The year under review has not been particularly favourable from a farming viewpoint, though, in the main, average seasonal conditions may be said to have prevailed. The recent summer has been a dry one and has affected production, particularly in the Bay of Plenty area. Figures now available indicate that there has been a serious decline in the butterfat-production per cow during the past season, and this is attributed in the main to the shortage of manure and the dearth of labour available for farm-work. Following a mild winter lambing percentages were good and the majority of the lambs were sent off fat, and no undue carry-over of culls will be necessary.

In common with all other districts, labour shortage and the absence of many of the settlers on active service, combined with restricted fertilizer-supplies and the rising costs of materials, precluded the extension of development operations. In fact, it has been exceedingly difficult to maintain areas which have already been developed, and deterioration of pastures and improvements is to be noticed, particularly on the marginal areas.

Ruatoki settlers were again put to considerable expense in the change over from cheese to butterfat, and it is regretted that such changes were found necessary in a communal such as Ruatoki, where old prejudices are still carried by many of the Native elders. Nevertheless, the change over has been accepted in a good spirit.

Butterfat-production of 1,935,683 lb. shows a reduction on the figure of last year.

Wool produced comprised 2,112 bales, which is an increase on the previous season.

A very dry season accounts for the decrease in butterfat, and a local dairy company states that production has dropped approximately 20 per cent. with its suppliers.

Extensive reviews of the unit loan accounts have been made and, generally speaking, the large settlement of Ruatoki shows up very favourably. There are a large number of accounts here either in credit or in a very healthy position. The other areas around the Bay of Plenty and Tauranga show reasonable loan accounts, with the exception that at Torere and Whakatohea there are numerous difficult bush sections where settlers are having some difficulty in meeting their liabilities.

The live-stock in this district is in good condition, and it is now quite a common sight to see special train loads of sheep, lambs, and cattle being forwarded to the freezing-works from the Rotorua area. In addition, a good local market has been built up by the Department in the supply of beef and mutton to the trade.

The rating demands of the four counties, Rotorua, Whakatane, Tauranga, and Opotiki, have been given much attention and, wherever possible, rates have been paid up to and including March, 1943. Satisfactory compromises, where necessary, have been effected, and it is hoped that the financial position of the properties will continue to improve so that future rating demands may be met promptly.

There are now many areas fully developed and ready for soldier settlement or rehabilitation purposes, but it is not recommended that they be subdivided until it is known what settlers are available and until the necessary buildings can be provided. These areas are meanwhile being grazed with sheep and run cattle.

In all parts of the district every encouragement has been given to settlers to grow extra areas of potatoes, maize, and kumara, and in this respect much time has been spent in fostering a campaign to increase the primary production of the district. It is pleasing to be able to record that where the crops were given the attention necessary, good yields resulted.

For the sixth time the Ahuwhenua Challenge Trophy was awarded to a Maori settler in this district, the winner on this occasion being a member of the Ngati-Kahungunu tribe farming at Horohoro, who was complimented by the judge for his initiative in general farm management.

Native Housing.—Housing activities are at a standstill, as the Public Works Department's organization has been fully employed on defence construction works. A proposal to establish this Department's own building organization has been ardently advocated for many years by this office, and it is hoped that consideration will be given to such an establishment at an early date in order that urgent housing applications, when approved, can be proceeded with expeditiously.