

in the competition should have a stimulating effect on the efforts of the neighbouring Native settlers.

In the main it has not been possible to obtain labour for other than maintenance work on the general development schemes. In many cases in this district, constant attention is necessary to control the growth and spread of noxious weeds, principally ragwort, blackberry, and gorse, and all labour available has been utilized on this work.

At Ranana the clearing of second-growth gorse and blackberry has been carried out, and considerable maintenance work undertaken on fences. The breeding-ewes were heavily culled and replaced with younger stock. A very satisfactory crop of swedes and choulmiller was grown on this scheme for winter feed.

A commencement has been made with dairying operations in the Tokaanu area, cream being supplied to the Kaitieke Dairy Co. In addition, a local milk-supply is being established for the Tokaanu residents. The successful inauguration of this new industry in the Tokaanu district must eventually tend to an era of economic self-sufficiency for the Natives resident there. The commencement of dairying here has also stimulated local interest and has been taken as an earnest endeavour on the part of the Department to implement its promises in this direction.

Operations on the Manunui scheme have been restricted to the maintenance of the areas under development, but it has been found possible to continue to a limited extent the clearing and logging work mentioned in previous reports. A quantity of timber has been salvaged and milled and is being held for departmental use, and, in addition, sales of firewood have continued. The abundance of first-class firewood within easy distance of metalled roads should go a long way towards meeting the costs of logging up. Dearth of labour at present precludes the available market being fully exploited.

The splitting of fencing-material at Rangataua has continued, the output, compared with that of the previous year, showing a considerable excess in the number of posts split. Considerable delay has been experienced in hauling the fencing-material from the bush, owing to the plant being impressed for urgent defence work and the contractor being subsequently called up for service with the armed forces. A new contract has since been arranged, and the fencing-material should now be available in larger quantities.

In certain localities, notably at Ranana, Manunui, and Tokaanu, workmen have formed National Savings groups, and the total savings amount to a considerable sum. This is an aspect on which it is considered more emphasis might be made by those interested in Maori welfare, providing, as it does, deferred spending-power which will be of invaluable assistance when these workmen are in turn established on holdings of their own.

Native Housing.—Despite the acute shortage of labour and materials, it has been found possible to erect two new houses on development areas, while four are in course of erection and four have been repaired. In addition, two milking-sheds and several other small buildings have been constructed, and others repaired.

Although the prevailing war conditions have restricted building operations, seven new buildings were erected under the Native housing scheme, while additions and renovations were effected to four dwellings. Three dwellings are in course of erection, and three houses were purchased.

IKAROA AND SOUTH ISLAND MAORI LAND BOARD DISTRICTS

Unfavourable weather experienced during the past year has adversely affected farming operations in both districts, although in the South Island conditions were somewhat better than in the North. On the Kaiwhare, Wairau, and Southland schemes, administered by the Lands Department, stock came through the winter in a satisfactory condition, and the supply of feed is assured for the coming winter. In the Wairarapa district the winter was followed by a long spell of dry weather which caused a serious shortage of feed. In the Hawke's Bay district conditions were even worse. Although stock came through a mild winter in good condition, there was no flush of feed in the spring owing to the lack of rainfall and excessive winds. The prospects for wintering stock in Hawke's Bay are therefore poor, and in these circumstances next season's lambing percentages are expected to be low and stock losses may be high. Pasture growth in the Manawatu has, generally speaking, been better than elsewhere in the Wellington Province.

In spite of adverse weather conditions, cropping results have been reasonably good. The Department's main cropping area is at Wairau, where wheat, peas, oats, grass-seed, and hay have been successfully harvested. No linen flax was grown on this scheme last year on account of the excessive weed growth, and a change over was made to peas. Unfortunately, wet conditions at germination spoiled a considerable area, but the balance matured reasonably well. Harvesting is not yet completed, but good yields are anticipated. In Hawke's Bay lack of rain and excessive winds resulted in a poor season for both rye-grass and clover, and there has been a consequent reduction in the area harvested for seed. A large quantity of potatoes has been grown in both the Ikaroa and South Island Districts in a special endeavour to assist the war effort.

No major capital works have been carried out during the year, due to the restricted supply of materials and the shortage of labour.

Native Housing.—A recent survey of housing conditions in northern Hawke's Bay undertaken by the Health Department indicates that continued efforts are necessary to improve the living conditions of Natives in this area. Owing to shortage of materials and the diversion of skilled labour to essential defence construction works, little progress is possible at the present time. Over the past twelve months six residential properties have been acquired under the Native Housing Act and seven dwellings have been erected or renovated. An increasing number of applications are awaiting attention.