

into the social and economic life of the country. The Board's policy in developing and settling Native land which has been gazetted as subject to Part I of the Native Land Amendment Act, 1936, to-day finds echo in Article 28 of the Australian-New Zealand Agreement. Therein it is declared that, in applying the principles of the Atlantic Charter to the Pacific, the doctrine of "trusteeship" should be applicable in broad principle to all colonial territories in the Pacific and elsewhere, and that the main purpose of the trust is the welfare of the Native peoples and their social, economic, and political development. The issue confronting the State in the social and economic advancement of the Maori race is one of human endeavour, progress towards the goal of which land-settlement provides the means. Its successful solution is to be measured not so much in terms of financial repayments of advances, but in what is equally important to the country—the positive results of happy homes and contented and virile people living on an equality in all respects with the pakeha.

Much requires to be done before the results sought to be obtained by the Government can be realized, but a very real effort is being made, and will continue to be made, towards the fulfilment of the Administration's policy. Rome was not built in a day, neither can the Maori be fully established as a self-supporting individual in the community within the space of a single generation.

Climatic conditions varied considerably in the different districts throughout the year under review. In North Auckland, following a reasonably good winter, the spring was late and very cold; a dry spell during summer was experienced, but in early autumn there was plenty of moisture which provided good pasture growth. Somewhat similar conditions obtained in the Waikato and King-country. In the Bay of Plenty and Rotorua areas, torrential rains in the early autumn caused widespread damage to farm properties and marred what might have been a reasonably good season from a farming viewpoint. The season in the Gisborne-East Coast and Wairoa districts has been wet, there being too much rain for sheep-farming; cold, wet weather in the early spring affected lambing percentages; and heavy floods in autumn resulted in severe damage to fences and culverts on farms, while many hundreds of acres of land slipped badly. Hawke's Bay and Wairarapa were very bare of feed until the spring, and since then there has been plenty of rain, resulting in an exceptionally good pasture growth, possibly too much for sheep-farming. On the west coast, extending from Wellington to New Plymouth, the spring was late; in November dry weather set in and almost drought conditions prevailed until early March, when rains relieved the situation. In practically every district the weather conditions towards the end of the year were good, and with a satisfactory growth, cattle should enter the winter in sound condition.

Notwithstanding unfavourable seasonal conditions in many districts, the farming returns for 1943-44 were the highest yet recorded, and amounted to £669,420, as compared with £617,442 for the previous year. A decline of over 5½ per cent. in butterfat-production was more than offset by the 17-per-cent. increase in wool proceeds 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 £875,000, an increase of £45,000 over the figures for the preceding period.

The principal items of production from State schemes controlled by the Board are as follow: butterfat, representing the Department's proportion only, which averaged 46 per cent., £156,015, as compared with £165,268 for the previous season; wool-sales, £114,084, as against £92,770 for 1943; proceeds from sheep and cattle sold, £267,806, in comparison with £240,073 for the previous year; and sundry receipts (crops and other farm produce), £36,521, the previous year's figures being £36,883. The volume of dairy-produce decreased from 5,652,695 lb. to 4,816,281 lb., while the wool-clip of 5,700 bales showed an increase of 385 bales over the 1943 season. The nineteen stations financed by the Native Trustee and the Maori Land Boards produced a total of 2,033 bales of wool of a gross value of £38,723, as compared with 2,123 bales (£37,725) for the preceding year; sales of live-stock on these properties reached £50,211, in comparison with £38,379 for 1943. On the East Coast Trust stations 3,650 bales of wool were shorn, the previous year's clip being 3,471 bales.

The live-stock returns at the 31st March, 1944, show a slight increase in sheep, and a decrease in cattle over the 1943 figures. The tallies, with the preceding year's figures shown in parentheses, on the farming schemes financed by the State were as follow: cows milked during the season, 39,500 (40,500); other dairy stock, 22,600 (25,200); run cattle, 28,000 (30,500); breeding-ewes, 160,200 (159,300); dry sheep, 128,100 (121,500). The sixteen Native Trust stations were carrying 7,300 (8,615) run cattle, 31,700 (31,000) breeding-ewes, and 34,900 (38,000) dry sheep; while the figures for the three Maori Land Board stations were 3,300 run cattle, 18,500 breeding-ewes, and 11,600 dry sheep. The Trust and Board properties derive their finance from Maori trust funds.

The gross expenditure of public moneys for the year under review on the agricultural and pastoral schemes controlled by the Department was £668,400 (compared with £648,300 for the previous year), the finance for which was provided from the following sources: farming receipts, £574,455; grants from the Consolidated Fund towards labour subsidies, £151,724. The year's working thus resulted in a surplus of £57,779, without recourse to new loan-moneys, and after meeting £82,851 in interest charges.

The Ahuwhenua (Son-of-the-soil) Trophy, presented by the Right Hon. Viscount Bledisloe during his Governorship of New Zealand for annual competition among Maori