

STATE DEVELOPMENT SCHEMES

Tokerau Maori Land Board District

One-quarter of our Maori race lives in North Auckland, and under modern conditions the population is fast increasing. Native land gazetted for development in this district comprises nearly 500,000 acres, a small proportion being of the first quality and much of it is unsuited for development. Consolidation and clarification of the land titles is proceeding steadily, but is proving a difficult task.

From a farming point of view, the year has not proved a good one. Spring was late and cold, and a dry spell followed during the summer, but the year ended in an exceptionally favourable autumn.

The scarcity of fertilizers, adverse labour conditions, and generally unfavourable weather has had some effect on dairy production, but on the whole the yield has been well maintained. No opportunity has been lost of impressing on settlers, of whom there are 834 financed by the State, the especial necessity in these times of maintaining production, and the response has been good. The Department's cash returns have shown increases by £8,000 to £85,590, although the butterfat-production is down by 13 per cent.

In spite of staff difficulties, every endeavour has been made to give close supervision to the Native settlers. Butterfat-production of 110 lb. per cow is still below the average Dominion rate of 210 lb., and endeavours have been made to correct this. A number of Native farmers are inclined to leave the milking to the elder children and do not realize the importance of standard shed and stock management. Efforts are being made to improve carrying-capacity by the greater provision of winter feed and to encourage the greater use of the plough. In one district a Maori young farmers' club has been formed and the results have been very gratifying.

The two entrants for the Ahuwhenua Trophy competition were placed sixth and ninth, and were considered by the judge to have done excellent work.

During the year the Waireia Estate, of 4,640 acres, situated twenty-four miles from Kohukohu on the northern shores of the Hokianga Harbour, was purchased. Access is by a metalled road running through the area; the block consists of about 1,000 acres in standing bush, and the balance, in fair pasture, is undulating to hilly, running into steep country at the back. Portions of this property will be suitable for closer settlement into approximately twelve holdings, and will provide relief to a district where there is a general shortage of suitable land and an expanding population.

The following table shows the present stock, &c., on both settlers' and scheme properties for the last two years:—

—			Dairy Cows.	Other Dairy Stock.	Run Cattle.	Sheep.	Bales of Wool produced.
1942-43	..	..	16,125	9,745	3,535	17,957	391
1943-44	..	..	15,456	9,311	3,837	20,420	448

Native Housing.—Building activities were greatly curtailed owing to the scarcity of materials and skilled labour being required for defence purposes. Only eleven houses were erected during the year, but as soon as the new housing organization is in a position to build, better progress will be made in connection with housing-construction for Natives. In addition to the above building operations, thirty-three cow-sheds were erected during the year on settlers' properties.

Waikato-Maniapoto Maori Land Board District

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

The past year has not been a favourable one from a farming point of view in this district, resulting in a sharp fall of 17 per cent. in butterfat-production. There was an exceptionally dry period during December and January, following which production recovered somewhat during a favourable autumn. Apart from the vagaries of the weather, shortage of fertilizer is precluding any marked increase in production. Moreover, wartime scarcities prohibit almost entirely any new land-development. There are, however, large Native-owned areas in this district which can be developed as soon as conditions again become favourable.

During the year the Tunaeke Scheme, near Whatawhata, was subdivided and settled by dairy-farmers, and their future progress will be reflected in the returns from the Waikato Unit Scheme.

Taking into account a large carry over of wool produced and not sold at the end of March, the financial returns have been well maintained, the proceeds to the Department amounting to £82,000.

This district has done well in the Ahuwhenua Cup competition, the second, fourth, and sixth places having been filled by Native farmers in the King-country and Kawhia areas.