

Passing reference can be made to the acquisition of several small areas. On the Te Ngae Road, near Brent's farm, a Native lease of 49 acres was acquired. This has good watering facilities and will be worked in with Brent's to assist the seasonal movements of stock. Another place of 649 acres, known as Wright's Block, adjoining the Okere Development Scheme was purchased, and this, with 668 acres gazetted under Part 1 of the Act, will consolidate the operations in this area.

Native Housing.—No Native houses were built during the period, but indications point to a recommencement of our housing activities in the coming year. Economic surveys, whenever carried out, disclose deplorable housing-conditions which demand immediate remedial action. The Native people evince keen interest in the housing proposals and back up their interest with cash deposits towards future homes. A Maori training-school in carpentry is being run at Ohinemutu by the Rehabilitation Department and should provide ample trained Maori carpenters to carry out the building programme when it is put into operation.

Tairāhiti Maori Land Board District

As with other districts, new development work has been necessarily retarded by reason of shortage of labour and materials consequent upon the war. It is hoped that in the next season some progress will be made with urgently needed capital and maintenance work. Two areas of 83 acres and 1,904 acres were gazetted as subject to the development provisions of the Act and included in the Te Araroa Scheme. The subdivision of the Whangawehi section of the Mahia Scheme into six dairy-farms is now being undertaken. The average area of each holding will be approximately 60 acres to 80 acres.

The Huramua Station, of 1,777 acres, at Wairoa, was offered for sale for purposes of the land-settlement of Maori servicemen. Since the close of the year covering this report, the property was purchased with a view to the establishment of instructional farms to be taken over later by discharged Maori servicemen. The property comprises land of good quality on the flats, and high ground of fair to good quality on the hills which provide winter run-off for dairy cows. Improvements have been well maintained, and satisfactory water-supply should be available to each proposed subdivision. There is a good metalled access road; the station is close to the railway and also to the Township of Wairoa, with the facilities for hospital, education, freezing-works, and dairy factory.

The rainfall during the season has been heavy, with serious floods in March which destroyed many of the crops in the vicinity of Gisborne. Damage was also caused to kumara and potato crops throughout the district, adversely affecting food-supplies. Erosion by the Waipū River during the last twelve months amounted to a loss of six acres.

A review of the financial position at the 31st March, 1944, shows that the amount owing to the Department in respect of development areas aggregating 18,000 acres is £72,436, while advances to 226 settlers total £192,008—an average indebtedness of £850 per settler.

The Department's share of butterfat receipts of £13,790 showed a small increase of £253 over last year's figures, whilst the wool proceeds of £23,838 gave the big advance of £9,214 over the previous twelve months—a 63-per-cent. increase. Live-stock sales are also up by 18 per cent., the total sales being £27,042.

The following table shows the present stock, &c., under the control of the Department in the Gisborne District:—

				Dairy Cows.	Other Dairy Stock.	Sheep.	Run Cattle.	Bales of Wool.
Native Department	..	..	..	3,515	2,413	57,252	4,584	1,280
Native Trustee	..	..	..	..	..	36,521	3,767	679
Maori Land Board	..	..	..	..	18	14,516	2,396	311
Totals	..	..	..	3,515	2,431	108,289	10,747	2,270

Calf clubs have been revived at the local schools, and the children have received useful tuition on this subject, in the form of lectures.

The one nominee from this district for the Ahuwhenua Trophy competition was placed fifth.

Native Housing.—The progress during the year in the building of homes has been necessarily slow, but it is hoped that in the coming year the work may gather momentum to help overtake the authorizations not yet completed of £20,000 ordinary advances and £14,000 Special Housing Fund advances. Ten dwellings were erected or renovated, and two purchased, during the period under review. The ability of the Maori to face up to his financial responsibilities under his housing mortgages is readily seen from the table hereunder. Based upon present trends, the present mortgages should be liquidated in