

Ikaroa and South Island Maori Land Board Districts

The boundaries of Ikaroa enclose the Manawatu and Wairarapa districts and the greater part of Hawke's Bay; while all Native land in the South Island is included in the district of the same name. Thus very great changes in climatic conditions are experienced within the boundaries of these districts, and, taken on the whole, the weather has been unfavourable for farming during the season under review. Hawke's Bay experienced a bad autumn which seriously affected the pastures and live-stock, and was later followed by a dry summer with a resultant shortage of water. In the Wairarapa an exceptionally dry spell, which extended through the summer into the winter, had deleterious effects on the autumn growth. The result was a hard winter for stock, with lambing percentages poor and stock losses heavy. In the South Island climatic conditions at Wairau were only fair; a hard winter with cold, wet conditions continuing through the spring was experienced. There was a sudden change to the other extreme in early December, and semi-drought conditions prevailed until mid-February. At Kaiwhare there was a long period of wet and cold weather with snow during the winter and early spring. Fodder received a very severe set-back. Although the stock went into the winter in good condition, by the spring they had definitely deteriorated and stock losses were heavy. In Southland, on the other hand, although the year was an exceptionally dry one, conditions were particularly favourable. Ample feed was available throughout the year and excellent lambing results were obtained. The wool yield was satisfactory and cattle made pleasing progress.

Cropping results have been reasonably good. Again a large quantity of potatoes has been grown as a special endeavour to assist the war effort. Conditions were not favourable for grass-seed production in Hawke's Bay, so an increased quantity of peas was successfully harvested. At Wairau — our main cropping area — wheat, oats, peas, potatoes, barley, hay, grass-seed, and a small area of linen flax were harvested with varying degrees of success owing to the vagaries of the weather. In the Wairarapa, peas and potatoes were grown and adequate returns received.

In spite of a difficult farming year, definite progress has been made on all schemes and reflects credit on the field supervision. There has been a reduction in the number of dairy cows in milk to 1,084, with a resultant fall of 17 per cent. in total poundage of butterfat produced. This has been offset by the all-round increase received from the sales of cattle and sheep of £16,575, as compared with £14,917 for the previous year, and wool proceeds of £6,009, compared with £4,405.

The winner of the Ahuwhenua Trophy competition was this year a settler at Hastings, to the wife of whom great credit is due for carrying on the farm so successfully during the settler's absence with the Air Force. The judge described the property as a compact little farm where everything is in its place, and that the type of farm — fat-lamb raising, grass-seed production, cropping for the canneries — makes it highly productive.

No major capital works have been carried out, due to the restricted supply of materials and the shortage of labour. As these wartime conditions appear to be gradually improving, it is hoped that the tempo of the progress can be stepped up in succeeding years. It has been the policy in this year, as in those immediately preceding, to maintain and consolidate the development already achieved. The net liability owing by the development area has been reduced during the year by £7,140 to £52,625, and that by settlers by £2,054 to £39,474.

Native Housing. — In the period under review only eight houses, four each in the Ikaroa and the South Island Districts, were erected. A contribution was made, however, towards the improvement of the living-conditions of the Native people by the purchase of thirteen houses in Ikaroa and two in the South Island. Most of the former were located in the environs of Masterton, and in all cases the Natives have expressed themselves as being most satisfied with the dwellings secured.

Houses have been kept in good repair, most of the painting having been done by the owners under supervision; and generally the properties are being well looked after.

Good work has been carried out in the South Island by a co-operative group of Maori tradesmen, favourable comment on the type of dwelling and workmanship having been received.

Every encouragement is being given to Maoris to lodge now applications for advances for houses so that they can be investigated and loans approved in readiness for an expansion of the building activities when labour and materials are available.

NATIVE TRUST AND MAORI LAND BOARD ACTIVITIES

The Board of Native Affairs exercises control over the expenditure on all farming operations undertaken or approved by the Native Trustee or a Maori Land Board, and over the development of any land and the management of any scheme or undertaking in connection with which any such expenditure has been made or incurred by these bodies. Similarly, the Board controls the investment on mortgage or otherwise of moneys available for investment in the Native Trustee's Account or in the account of any Maori Land Board.