

used where possible, and the results obtained have proved the wisdom of this course. There is no doubt about this area cutting up into three good farms, two dairy and one mixed.

*Tuamarina.* This property of 146 acres near Blenheim was acquired during the year and allotted as two cropping units to ex-servicemen.

*Torodes Orchard.*—This is a fully producing commercial orchard of 68 acres at Fairhall with about 48 acres in apple-trees of most of the popular commercial varieties, the balance in plantation and pasture. It was first acquired by the Department in 1938. This year the area was surveyed into two blocks and two ex-servicemen accepted on a wage basis. Valuations have been made and charges finally fixed, and leases are to be granted as from 1st May, 1946. Early this year there was every prospect of a record crop, but unusually severe late frosts proved disastrous to the trees and caused serious loss, especially amongst the early apples, and it is doubtful if we will reach 4,000 cases. Most other orchards suffered the same fate, and the stone-fruits were a total loss.

*Valleyfield.*—This property of approximately 2,506 acres at Waihopai was purchased from the Bell Estate recently, and the Department intends to continue to farm it as a mixed sheep and cropping farm, lay down pastures, and erect subdivision fencing till the necessary buildings can be erected. Tenders have been called. It is intended to subdivide it into three blocks, and it has already been balloted for on a wages basis with one settler as Manager.

*Molesworth (Area, 239,600 Acres).*—Owing to its situation, Molesworth is subject to severe winter conditions with frequent and heavy falls of snow and heavy rainstorms, and this year has been no exception, the snow lasting till fairly late in the year. There has been a fair amount of flooding, causing much damage to fences and pastures. Nevertheless, the station continues to show marked improvement, thus justifying the policy of endeavouring to gradually bring about an increase of plant cover over the eroded areas and increased cover on the pasture lands. To this end the war on the rabbits has been carried on very energetically, the total destroyed for the twelve months ended 30th November, 1945, of 43,188 being a record year's killing since the Crown resumed possession. The cost of this work is one of the major items of expense and infestation is still fairly widespread. Poisoning in the spring has been followed up by persistent trapping, with an average of 70 rabbits per man per day. Pastures continue to show improvement, with natural regeneration in greater evidence, including bluegrass, cocksfoot, timothy, and tussock, with sorrel and Yorkshire fog appearing more extensively in shingle slides. This is a very good feature, as it may help to arrest the run of the shingle. Around the homestead some 60 acres has been top-dressed with lime and superphosphate with good results. The grassing experiments have been continued during the year under the personal care of Dr. H. H. Allen, of the Botany Division of the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research. Plantations have been extended by the planting of about 2,000 additional trees at the Acheron and Red Gate, including 500 *Pinus murrayana*. Those trees planted the previous year appear to be doing well. The cattle continue to do well and this year shows a marked increase in numbers, there being about 2,858 all told, including 971 cows, 463 heifers, 761 steers, and 618 calves. At the same period last year the total was 2,234, including 475 calves. This year the bulls were put out for a longer period than previously and better results are expected. With the type of bull in use there has been a gradual improvement in the quality of the cattle generally. The annual draft for sale last season totalled just on 600, but this year it will not be quite so large owing to the increase needed on the station. Besides the grassing and plantations, other important improvements have been effected during the year. New yards were erected at Tarndale, a considerable length of new drains dug, and about 637 chains of new fencing, including a break across Travellers Valley. Considerable fence repairs and improvements were also effected. Two 8 ft. by 10 ft. Army huts were purchased and re-erected outback at Cow Creek and Finger Post, and these will provide much better accommodation when droving cattle to the rail on their way to Addington and also for the rabbiters and fencers. A