

In most cases the properties being purchased are fairly well improved and the major items of development are roading, fencing, water-supplies, and buildings. Progress of development works has been rendered difficult by the shortage of essential materials such as fencing-wire, posts, piping, &c. The Housing Department has also experienced considerable difficulties and delays with the provision of the necessary buildings.

The results from farming operations on the various blocks were generally quite satisfactory, as this district missed the full force of the drought which so severely affected other parts of New Zealand.

In order to assist Hawke's Bay, which had been severely affected by the drought, a considerable amount of stock from blocks in that district are being grazed on blocks in Wellington. Hawke's Bay will require their stock again in the spring, and we will then be forced to restock on a rising market, and this will naturally adversely effect trading results on the blocks concerned.

*Tokomaru.*—This is a block of heavy country between Shamon and Palmerston North. Development was completed during the year, charges were fixed, and the three dairy sections have been disposed of to Grade "A" ex-servicemen.

*Awarua.*—This block of 1,993 acres is situated east of Taihape and is about half freehold, purchased in February, 1945, and half education reserve. It is all excellent papa sheep country and will provide four holdings. Four Grade "A" men have been selected by ballot and are working on wages. Development comprises principally erection of dwellings and fencing. The building programme is well under way, but fencing has been somewhat retarded by shortage of labour and materials. However, it is hoped to have charges fixed and leases issued in time for the men to take over their individual sections prior to the coming season.

*Kahu.*—Is an education reserve of 380 acres near Mangaweka and is all papa hill country. A Grade "A" ex-serviceman was selected by ballot and has been working on wages. The fencing programme and provision of water-supply is well in hand, but the provision of a dwelling has been delayed, although a contract was let in January. This is a one-unit property and it is hoped to fix charges and allow the settler to take over prior to next season.

*Purakau.*—This block of excellent dairy country, comprising 1,140 acres and situated near Featherston, was purchased in February, 1945, and is to be subdivided into nine sections. Development work is well in hand, apart from buildings, and the contractors have now commenced these and it is hoped that sufficient progress will be made to permit of charges being fixed and settlers receiving their individual titles in time for next season. The ballot has already been held and the successful settlers are working on wages or share basis. During the past season two herds aggregating 300 dairy cows were milked with excellent results. The development on this block included the construction of about 100 chains of stop-bank, and this has been completed by the Public Works Department.

*Longridge.*—This area is situated to the east of Masterton and was acquired in February, 1945. It comprises 1,889 acres and is all flat and easy hill country suitable for fattening. The four sections into which the block is subdivided have been balloted for and the successful ex-servicemen are all working on wages. The development programme is well advanced and the buildings have all be completed and are now occupied. It is intended to fix charges and issue titles in time for next season.

*Te Maipi.*—This block, which comprises 2,724 acres suitable for subdivision into three sections, is also situated east of Masterton and was acquired by purchase in February, 1945. The subdivisions have all been allocated by ballot and the men are working on wages. The development programme involves roading, buildings, fencing, water-supply, and some cultivation. Owing to shortage of materials and labour there has been considerable delay with fencing and buildings and it is doubtful whether enough progress will be made to enable us to arrange for settlement in time for the 1946-47 season.