

development blocks on which work was commenced in the "thirties." These blocks total 214,290 acres, but of this, 35,000 acres is considered as unsuitable for development and 69,000 acres capable of development but as yet completely unimproved. This leaves 100,000 acres capable of being farmed at the moment, but approximately 25,000 acres of this is required for base farms for the purpose of developing other lands. The balance available for early settlement (subject always to supplies of manure and other materials being available) could be put at 75,000 acres. It is estimated that there are not more than 100,000 acres of undeveloped Crown land capable of development. There are, thus, 169,000 acres of Crown land capable of development, but not developed; 75,000 acres of Crown land developed; and 177,000 acres of acquired land available for settlement. Summing up, there are approximately 250,000 acres available for settlement and 169,000 acres undeveloped but capable of development, a total of approximately 420,000 acres. As stated above, the requirements of 5,000 new settlers is 1,200,000 acres. Hence, some 800,000 acres of occupied land will need to be purchased.

The above argument has proceeded on the assumption that farm-management techniques will remain unaltered and hence that existing second- and third-grade land will remain second- and third-grade land respectively, and therefore will not be capable of closer settlement. This assumption is by no means proved, but it would be unwise to plan for closer settlement of these areas unless some radical changes in productive capacity were distinctly foreseen. Another possible development is the subdivision of existing farms so as to encourage further settlement. With increasing carrying-capacity, particularly on dairy-farms, there will be a tendency to reduce the size of the average farm. In view, however, of the existing structure of subdivisions this possibility is rather remote. No major immediate increase in land settlement can be looked for from this source.

The conclusion to be drawn from the above argument is that there is little possibility of a largely increased agricultural population in New Zealand. This is not to say that the actual agricultural production will not expand. The expansion of the last two decades has shown that, due to improved farm-management techniques and to the advance of mechanization, the volume of production, both in the aggregate and per unit of labour employed, has increased in a major degree. This tendency will, other things being equal, continue.

If the above argument is correct, then, apart from the 5,000 ex-servicemen to be settled on the land, there is no great scope for further agricultural population. From evidence produced by the Director of Employment it would appear that even at the present time there is no great demand for farm labour. The following table shows the notified male vacancies for labour in farming. Female vacancies are almost negligible:—

Table No. 119.—Table showing Male Vacancies for Farm Labour recorded by the Employment Department in 1946

Date.	Number.	Farming Vacancies as a Percentage of Total Male Recorded Vacancies.
31st January	280	4·9
28th February	281	4·1
31st March	259	3·6
30th April	167	2·4
31st May	235	3·2
30th June	304	3·8
31st July	364	4·5

Although approximately 30 per cent. of the male occupied population is engaged in the farming industry, only 4·5 per cent. of the current total of notified male vacancies in all industries relates to farming. The Director of Employment states:—

District Employment Officers in farming areas report that increasing difficulty is being experienced in placing workers on farms in view of the small number of openings and the lack of suitable accommodation for workers. At present in some districts there is actually more labour offering than can be absorbed.