

A total of 141,500 battens, 31,650 posts, and 510 strainers were cut and disposed of under licence from the State Forest Service, 67,000 battens, 24,000 posts, and 350 strainers being used in the various Maori Land Board districts for fencing purposes, &c.

IKAROA MAORI LAND COURT DISTRICT

This is one of the smaller districts, the area gazetted totalling 13,000 acres, of which 5,000 acres are already under permanent grass. The district is situated in the southern portion of the North Island. It also experienced semi-drought conditions during the year under review, but production was nevertheless sustained. There was a slight increase in the amount of butterfat and wool produced.

With the idea of promoting market-gardening amongst the Maoris of the Manawatu, an area of 4 acres at Otaki has been made available for practical instruction in propagating and growing commercial flower plants and vegetable crops for sale. The nursery will also act as a base from which cultivating machinery may be operated to provide that service for Maoris who wish to engage in market-gardening.

Although a good deal remains to be done before the nursery will be operating as ultimately intended, nevertheless potatoes, tomatoes, green vegetables, corn, and flowers have already been marketed.

One of the Department's Horticultural Supervisors has charge of the project, and it is anticipated that it will speedily justify its establishment. Excellent work of a permanent nature will be performed for the Maori population in the district and a base for informative and reliable directions and suggestions for those engaged in market-gardening will be provided.

SOUTH ISLAND MAORI LAND COURT DISTRICT

This district contains the smallest area gazetted for development—viz., 4,155 acres, of which approximately 3,600 acres are considered suitable for development. The reduction in area compared with last year is due to the fact that two properties have been released from the Department's control.

The dairying-operations continue to show satisfactory results, although there was a drop in butterfat-production. On the other hand, the production of wool showed an increase.

Development is being pushed ahead on the schemes in this district, a very creditable performance during the year being the clearing of almost 600 acres. This area cleared represents one-third of the undeveloped area shown in last year's return.

A D4 caterpillar tractor has been purchased for use on the Southland Scheme and has already been brought into use.

PART II.—MAORI LAND BOARD UNDERTAKINGS

Under statutory authority conferred on Maori Land Boards, several properties totalling 42,435 acres and ranging in size from 70 acres to 13,845 acres are being farmed by the Maori Land Boards concerned on behalf of the beneficial owners, who share in the proceeds of the farming activities. Three stations are situated in the Waiariki District, three in the Tairāwhiti District, and one in the Aotea District. On these stations, the total number of sheep carried as at the 31st March, 1948, was 40,600, while 1,346 bales of wool were produced during the year.

There are also several mortgage properties administered by the Tairāwhiti District Maori Land Board, and from these areas 299 bales of wool were obtained.

The activities of the Morikau Station, a property of 11,806 acres in the Aotea District, resulted in £8,200 being distributed to the owners during the twelve months ended 30th June, 1947.