

SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

Investigations have been made and reports prepared in regard to the constitution of a soil conservation district in the Marlborough Sounds area, and a meeting of interested parties is to be held at an early date to enable a firm recommendation to be made. The Waitaki Soil Conservation Committee is functioning smoothly, and by exercising its powers with caution has gained the confidence of the landholders.

SOIL CONSERVATION

Progress in soil conservation is being severely retarded by lack of Council and Catchment Board soil conservation staff, and as a consequence only a minimum of work has been possible in information service, conservation surveys, demonstration and experimental work, and conservation operations. Indicated on Table III is the small amount of conservation work undertaken.

An important event of the year was the Seventh Pacific Science Congress, attended by noted conservationists from several countries. The Council arranged for Dr. E. S. Archibald, Director of Experimental Farms, Canada, and Dr. E. G. Holt, Research Specialist, Soil Conservation Service, United States of America, to undertake a comprehensive aerial reconnaissance of this country during the intersessional period. They expressed admiration for the excellent pasture and tree cover of the country, but were amazed at the seriousness of the soil-erosion problems in many parts—and in particular North Auckland, East Coast North Island, and South Island high country. They discussed problems of prevention and control with Catchment Boards, departmental officers, and Cabinet Ministers, and commended the regional administration by Catchment Boards. The dominant note at the Science Congress was the world food shortage, coupled with the soil-erosion problems of the Pacific Region and the consequent urgency of assessing by survey the land capability and conservation needs of each of the Pacific countries.

1. INFORMATION SERVICE

(a) *Evidence to the Sheep Industry Commission.*—A comprehensive report covering the problems and the conservation needs of New Zealand and the Council's policy and organization as it affects the industry was prepared and submitted.

(b) *Scientific Papers.*—Papers titled "Modification in Land Use for Conservation in New Zealand" for the Seventh Pacific Science Congress and "Preliminary Aerial Top-dressing Trials" for the United Nations Scientific Conference on the Conservation and Utilization of Resources, Lake Success, were prepared and forwarded by the Senior Soil Conservator.

(c) *Mobile Cinema Unit and Movie Films.*—During the past year this unit has continued to visit Catchment Boards in rotation, having made comprehensive screenings to schools and adult farmer audiences. The programme, consisting of the following films, has been made under the Council's direction in New Zealand: "Assets to Ashes"; "We Live by Water"; "Soil Conservation Work at Te Awa"; "Bringing Back the Balance"; "Farmers Tackle River Gully and Slip Erosion"; "Poverty Bay To-day and To-morrow." These films on the problems and their control in this country have been well received and the increased attendances augur well for the future of this service. A new programme is in course of production for the new circuit commencing next October.

The Council is appreciative of the ready co-operation and assistance of Catchment Board members, Federated Farmers, Young Farmers clubs, and headmasters of schools in increasing the scope of the mobile cinema Unit's service to the community.