

## APPENDIX IV.—EXTRACTS FROM REPORT ON SMALL FARMS SCHEME.

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The number of blocks under development has increased during the year from four to thirty, the total number under development or under consideration is forty-nine, and the estimated number of subdivisions that will ultimately be obtained from the forty-nine blocks is 236.

The area on which development is being carried out has increased from 7,226 acres to 21,127 acres, while the total area either under development or under consideration has reached a total of 32,688 acres.

The satisfactory position as indicated in the report is in a great measure due to the assistance given by the District Engineer, Public Works Department, Taumarunui, and his staff. The experience gained from working with the Public Works, Taumarunui, is of great value and is now being taken advantage of by the District Engineer, Auckland, and the Resident Engineer, Wanganui, and their staffs.

The first block on which development was undertaken was Pururu, which was commenced in October, 1933. Ngatamahine, Lee's, and Mairoa were commenced shortly afterwards, and as the development has been under the control of this Branch, a comprehensive report is now possible and certain results from the last two years' operations are comparable and are shown in the accompanying schedules. These blocks are referred to as the "four main blocks." Work on three other blocks was commenced by this Branch, and at the 31st March last twenty-three other blocks were taken over from the Commissioners of Crown Lands, amongst these were eighteen blocks which had formerly been developed under the 4c Scheme. These blocks are not sufficiently developed to consider handing them over to the settlers. They all require inspections, reports, and estimates for the cost of completion. A total of twenty-eight blocks is in this position.

*Improvements.*—The work completed on the four main blocks has shown a satisfactory increase in amount during the year.

The aim has been, as far as possible, to effect permanent improvements of a high standard, and there is ample proof that this standard is improving, especially in regard to pasture-control and feeding of stock. It has been found very difficult to obtain satisfaction in the foregoing owing to the different conditions, varied classes of workers, and the necessity of a fairly large amount of experimental work necessary with the men to educate them along lines that are essential.

This end is being gained with the least possible amount of friction and ill feeling, and every reasonable opportunity is given the men to prove themselves satisfactory.

It is satisfactory to note that practically all classes of development and repair work are undertaken by tradesmen on the schemes. Experience shows that, taken on the whole, the men do a reasonable amount, considering the wages and conditions, but it is also evident that the older men are, on the whole, the better workers and require considerably less supervision.

Schedule 1 sets out the work completed on the four main blocks, and Schedule 2 compares the work completed at 31st March, 1935, with that at 31st March, 1936.

*Stock.*—The stock carried on the four main blocks is shown as at 31st March, 1935, and 31st March, 1936, in Schedule 3. There has been a decrease in the number of ewes of 424, but an increase in the number of dairy stock of 153. The number of run cattle shows a decrease due to sales and transfers. It is intended this year to commence breeding run cattle and about 50 Polled Angus heifers will be bred from; in addition, a number of Romney rams have been put out this season, so that a commencement has been made to breed for future requirements of sheep. It is considered that this is the best policy now that it has been proved that it is possible to breed satisfactorily on the schemes. This change of policy will, of course be reflected in next year's returns, as there will not be so many fat lambs for sale and the wether lambs will be carried over for fattening and sale as two-tooths. However, after the second year, the returns should show a very much improved position and it will be decreasingly necessary to go on the market for the purchase of stock in the future.

The stock carried on ten new blocks is also shown in Schedule 3, and, in addition, the total stock on the fourteen blocks, which is valued at the Department's standard values at £12,749 and also at a reasonable market value of £18,980.

*Produce.*—Sales of dairy cattle and produce, fat and store sheep, and wool, run cattle and pigs are shown in Schedule 4, and they reach the satisfactory total for the four main blocks of £8,003. This, of course, does not represent the total production, as, in addition, milk is supplied free to about five hundred people.

Schedule 4 sets out the total amounts received for the various kinds of produce and sales for the four main blocks, while Schedule 5 shows the production from these blocks for the various kinds of produce and stock as at 31st March, 1935, and 31st March, 1936. The increase from £3,207 in 1935 to £8,003 in 1936, a gain of £4,796, must be considered satisfactory.

Schedule 6 gives a comparison showing the facts regarding the fat lambs bred and sold from the four main blocks as at 31st March, 1935, and 31st March, 1936. The number increased by 54 per cent., the total weight by 59 per cent., the cash returns by 64 per cent., the average weight per lamb increased 2.06 lb., and the average price by 2s. 2d. per head.

Schedule 7 compares the wool produced and sold from the four main blocks as at 31st March, 1935, and 31st March, 1936. The number of bales increased by seven in spite of a reduction in the numbers of sheep, the weight of the wool increased by 16 per cent., and the return was more than doubled. In the case of Lee's the wool was binned, and the resulting price of over £13 per bale indicates the advisability of binning the small lots.