

County there are no Unemployment No. 5 works, but it was possible to co-operate with the County Council and Public Works Department in the formation of the Matangirau access road, which undertaking, besides absorbing a large number of men, will be a valuable asset to the district.

In the Mangonui area there are 175 settlers, and, in addition, 56 other farmers were assisted, besides 80 relief workers, dependent upon all of whom were 1,373 adults and children.

Work on unit and scheme properties for the year comprised the clearing of 2,882 acres; 3,395 chains of new fencing, with 992 chains of repairs; splitting of 7,000 posts, 117 strainers, 2,520 battens; 2,297 chains of draining, and cleaning of 744 chains; cultivation of 596 acres; and erection of 11 cottages and 13 cow-sheds. On other farm properties suitable development works were carried out, including bushfelling, clearing, fencing, draining, roading, and the erection of 15 cottages. Full details of these activities are included in the table published on page 12.

An improvement is noticeable in the pastures, due, no doubt, to the increased top-dressing that has been applied, and this is reflected in the dairying returns for the year under review. The unit and scheme live-stock tally as at 31st March, 1937, was as follows: 2,629 dairy cows, 732 other dairy stock, 57 run cattle, 115 sheep, 207 horses, 150 bulls, and 270 pigs. The Department's share of the cream returns (approximately one-third) was £5,015.

The opportunity is taken to mention that the Natives living at Te Hapua, some eighteen miles north of Te Kao, have been given during the past twelve months, suitable relief. The very bad conditions under which they live is no doubt contributing to their poor health, and, after investigation, unemployment works were made available for them.

A special welfare officer was appointed by the Government in the interests of these people, but consequent upon the improvement in the gum market it was found that the Natives were able to earn sufficient without any assistance from the State. The market position has continued to show an upward trend, and it is considered that satisfactory prices for gum will be maintained for some time to come. Probably for this reason the Natives show a reluctance to accept the conditions of betterment proposed for them, but in order that any failure in the gum market will be met it is proposed to develop an area of two to three hundred acres at Ngataki, situated south of Te Kao, as an experiment. This work will provide a measure of employment for the younger people, but it is certain that the older inhabitants of Te Hapua will not migrate southwards. In the event of a collapse of the gum industry at some future time it will therefore be necessary to undertake a certain amount of unemployment work in the Te Hapua area to meet the position for the older people. This will probably be in the nature of afforestation, as the land in that locality is entirely unsuitable for development.

Manukau Base Farm.

Situated in the Mangonui County on the main Kaitaia-Herekino Road, with a frontage to the road at four different points, this block contains an area of 830 acres. There are some good alluvial flats, while the country rises to steep hills of good loamy clay, which can be successfully grassed. There is a large area of standing bush, estimated at 430 acres, containing good puriri and taraire, and about 400 acres in grass. It is well watered in front, but the high bush country has a supply of water only at the back. If run as a station it is estimated that it will carry 700 ewes and 100 head of cattle. There will be some 500 acres on final development suitable for dairying. The pastures are in good heart, and the cattle are in excellent condition. During the season 28 calves from 30 Hereford cows were marked. The live-stock on hand at the 31st March, 1937, consisted of 30 calves, 32 cows, 7 heifers, 29 steers, 22 yearlings, 115 lambs, and 12 working-bullocks.

While proposals have been formulated for the ultimate subdivision of this area with some adjoining Native lands, the present intention is to continue development and to manage the property as a base farm for a further period. The work carried out during the year is included in the Mangonui scheme figures.

Motatau Base Farm.

This is the main farm of the northern district, comprising 770 acres of Native leasehold land, and being located at Pokapu, near Otiria. Since its inception as a scheme under development operations its primary function has been to facilitate the distribution of dairy stock for unit farmers in the Bay of Islands and Hokianga districts.

A dairy herd of approximately 75 cows was established, but the question of disposing of the dairy herd and running the property as a grazing proposition is now under review. The successive floods experienced to date have prejudiced the successful running of sheep together with a dairy herd. As the latter is run on the better portions of the station, it is found that sufficient feed is not always available for the sheep and cattle which are run on the hill country. In order to achieve the best results from this property a comprehensive drainage scheme for the whole of this district is necessary. Under the conditions that have been experienced good results cannot be expected, but, nevertheless, it is interesting to note that the butterfat figures since the year 1932 are as follows:—

	lb.
31st May, 1932	8,062
31st May, 1933	10,581
31st May, 1934	13,607
31st May, 1935	16,516
31st May, 1936	13,906
31st May, 1937	17,126
	79,798