

The extension of the development schemes greatly increased the demand for camp accommodation, and central depots were established for the building of huts, store-sheds, &c. Thirty-seven carpenters were employed at 31st March, 1939, in the Te Kuiti depot, the output from which exceeded four hundred huts.

With a view to curtailing as far as possible the stock purchases on the open market, the policy of breeding sheep and cattle suitable for the particular requirements of the schemes has been actively followed. The eezema epidemic had a marked effect on the lambing percentage in the King-country district, but the position will gradually improve if there is no further outbreak of the disease.

The production and stock figures for the year compared with those for 1937–38 are of interest :—

STOCK CARRIED.						1938.	1939.
Sheep	..	..	..	..	..	57,615	81,848
Dairy cattle	..	..	..	..	..	5,322	7,227
Run cattle	..	..	..	..	..	4,469	10,142
Horses	..	..	..	..	..	359	671
Pigs	..	..	..	..	..	2,520	1,408

PRODUCTION.						1938.	1939.
Butterfat—							
Weight	..	..	..	..	..	690,622 lb.	1,092,275 lb.
Value	..	..	..	..	..	£37,766	£68,850 10s. 10d.
Wool—							
Bales	..	..	..	..	..	699 bales	1,425 bales
Value	..	..	..	..	..	£9,176	£16,823 18s. 8d.
Sheep sold—							
Number	..	..	..	..	..	27,907	35,444
Value	..	..	..	..	..	£33,844	£28,873 10s.
Cattle sold—							
Number	..	..	..	..	..	922	3,121
Value	..	..	..	..	..	£4,547	£21,398 10s. 5d.
Pigs sold—							
Number	..	..	..	..	..	3,609	4,622
Value	..	..	..	..	..	£4,755	£6,927 3s. 4d.
Miscellaneous : Skins, &c.	..	..	..	..	..	£853	£5,018 6s. 6d.

The above figures relate to all lands controlled by the Board.

The gross expenditure for the year was : Material, stock &c., £459,197 ; wages, £316,603.

Following are brief notes on the blocks in the several land districts :—

NORTH AUCKLAND LAND DISTRICT.

Mangawai Block (1,856 Acres).

(Control : Commissioner of Crown Lands, North Auckland.)

Comprising part of the Mangawai Kauri-gum Reserve, originally rich in gum deposits, the block now offers reasonable prospects of successful development and farming. Of the 1,856 acres taken over by the Small Farms Board, 1,100 acres comprises swamp country and the balance easy slopes. Operations were commenced in July, 1935, primarily with the object of relieving unemployment.

A main drain 227 chains in length, 18 ft. to 20 ft. wide, and 8 ft. to 10 ft. deep, with the necessary subsidiary drains, has effectively dewatered the whole of the swamp, and at the same time has provided an outlet for water from several properties adjoining. The filling of the gum holes by man-power was not entirely satisfactory, and a bulldozer was brought into operation. This has proved both efficient and economical. It fills as well as consolidates the holes, and is capable of covering about an acre a day.

Four hundred and twenty-nine acres are in grass, 420 acres fallow, 250 acres cleared, and 566 acres remains in its natural state ; 1,440 chains of fencing has been erected, and 1,547 chains of drains dug.

The stock carried consists of 61 run cows and heifers and 128 steers.

A sand-drift along one and a half miles of the sea-front has caused some concern and considerably delayed the development operations on part of the area. Effective control measures have now been taken.

Number of men employed : Twenty-one.

Puriri Block (1,400 Acres).

(Control : Land-development Superintendent, Auckland.)

This is a block of undulating to hilly land of good quality in the Kaitia district on which the bush had been worked over by a timber company. The procedure adopted has been to fell the bush in the winter, burn and sow to permanent pasture in the following autumn, and proceed with fencing to permit of control of the pasture with sheep and cattle. Fencing material is readily obtainable from puriri growing on the block, and, in addition, a considerable number of logs have been converted to building-timber at a mill on the block. Logging of the unburnt timber has been put in hand, and this will be proceeded with. Small areas have been cultivated and sown in swedes.