

was favoured with a mild year and quantities of winter fodder have been brought forward. The East Coast - Gisborne - Wairoa district experienced a year so unusually dry that conditions were difficult for many farmers with inadequate water-supplies. The Wairarapa, Manawatu, and Hastings districts had a spell of wet weather at shearing and harvesting time which resulted in some loss, but otherwise the seasons were not abnormal. In the South Island very difficult conditions were experienced in Southland and the dreariness of a very wet winter prevailed well into December. Further heavy rain in March interfered with the harvesting of cereals but produced a flush of grass, while at Wairau similar conditions prevailed. Snowstorms shortly after lambing time caused serious interference with stock in the Wellington and Manawatu districts and on the South Island schemes. The Taranaki area experienced some of the most favourable climatic conditions for many years, with the result that the butterfat production in that district reached a new record.

Ahuwhenua Trophy

"Son of the Soil" trophy, presented by Lord Bledisloe during his term as Governor-General of New Zealand as a challenge trophy for competition by Maori settlers on land development schemes, was awarded this year to Mr. J. Wharekura, a farmer from Horohoro, in the Rotorua district.

The annual contest continues to exhibit unquestionable value in encouraging the Maori people to strive for the best results from the farming of their holdings and so stimulate a spirit of emulation and healthy competition. The judge, in making his award this year, stated that the development work carried out, the standard of farming adopted, and the volume of production was a great credit to all concerned, and he remarked that the same degree of effort applied, as it could be, to large areas of land in the North Island would increase production many times. The competitors had shown what was possible by the application of energy, determination, and intelligence, with departmental assistance where necessary.

This year's winner, who was placed third in last year's contest, farms 125 acres, running 63 cows and heifers together with a small flock of sheep and some pigs. His return from a commercial crop of potatoes was excellent. The second placed competitor has a farm of 56 acres carrying 44 cows and heifers, 2 working horses, and 26 pigs.

Consolidation

Consolidation has not made the progress expected during the year under review, more particularly because sufficient trained staff has not been available for the work. For nearly eighty years now New Zealand has pursued, through the machinery of the Native Land Courts, the simplification of Native land titles. Relatively small progress was made until 1930. In that year an active policy of development of Native lands began, and it was found that ownership of land by numerous individuals or by a community was a serious handicap to progress of the development scheme, and the progress of consolidation was resorted to in a greater measure. Consolidation has been defined as "the act of grouping into units of economic efficiency the multitudinous interests of a Maori community in scattered remnants of land, such consolidation being accomplished with a strict regard to the legal rights of each individual owner and the value of the interests concerned." Expressed briefly, this work entails locating in one composite area the scattered landed interests of an individual or, at the most, of a family or hapu into compact groups as far as possible, convenient from an economic farming point of view. Every endeavour is made to provide the new holdings, where practicable, with all the natural accessories demanded by modern farming, and accordingly the new boundaries laid down for each block are governed by natural features, water-supply, accessibility by road, and the like.

Native Trustee

The investments of the Native Trustee and the seven Maori Land Boards, controlled, as they are, by the Board of Native Affairs, show a sound financial position. At the conclusion of the last financial year the Native Trustee had £181,830 invested in Government securities, £372,560 on mortgage, and a further £134,319 by way of overdraft to stations and other farm properties. The Maori Land Boards at 31st March had £242,237 on deposit with the Native Trustee, £271,029 invested in Government securities, £221,489 invested in mortgages to various Maoris, and had granted overdrafts amounting to £70,348 to various properties engaged in primary production. The total liability to Maori beneficiaries of institutions under the control of the Board was £849,461, this being covered by investments amounting to £1,493,812, reserve funds of £386,878, and cash balances of £68,789.

Horticulture

In his primitive state the Maori necessarily depended largely upon the limited range of his crops for sustenance, and with the aid of crude implements and infinite patience and diligence developed a high degree of proficiency in supplementing the natural resources of the country. Many have orientated themselves to the changed circumstances of a new mode of life, but through comparative isolation or inability to keep pace with modern development many are still in a state of transition, and more intimate contact is required to exploit the latent potentialities of the people and aid them in achieving the degree of self-sufficiency and confidence in operations essential to their welfare.

A good response has followed the inauguration of efforts to stimulate cropping and horticultural pursuits, and the number of people interested and desirous of producing commercial crops of maize, onions, and potatoes is increasing. Coincident with organized production has been the systematic marketing of produce, with uniformly satisfactory results and better returns to the growers than have hitherto been obtained under individual marketing. During the last year, kumaras, potatoes, onions, and carrots to the approximate value of £20,000 were marketed on behalf of Maori producers by the Native Department. This, in addition to the quantity sold by the growers personally, constitutes a worth-while effort under the existing conditions.

There is every indication that guidance in cropping and orderly marketing can play a big part in improving the well-being of the people and the national economy. As in all undertakings where