

Horticulture

Proposals for developing the activities of the Maori people under this heading are under close investigation. Owing to distance from markets and other factors the prospects for commercial growing are not good, but it is anticipated that much benefit will be obtained from the fostering of the home gardens and orchards.

Rehabilitation

This is an important problem and one which will demand increasing attention as repatriation proceeds. Close liaison is maintained with the Rehabilitation Department and immediate attention is given to all cases as they come forward with the object of training ex-servicemen for farming or of placing them where they are fitted for immediate placement either on their own lands or on areas acquired for rehabilitation purposes.

Waikato-Maniapoto Maori Land Board District

With headquarters at Auckland, this district embraces the Waikato, Hauraki, and King-country areas. There are three sub-offices—Paeroa, Hamilton, and Te Kuiti—and local supervision is carried out by six field officers. The total area gazetted is 67,777 acres, of which 30,923 acres are in occupation by 244 Native settlers. A total of 12,165 acres have been developed by the Department and administered under sixteen comprehensive schemes or stations, many of which will be considered for subdivision into suitable areas for closer settlement by Maori farmers as occasion arises.

Good climatic conditions favoured the district and consequently an excellent season resulted. Adequate quantities of hay and winter feed have been conserved.

For the year under review the total production of butterfat was 851,226 lb., giving an increase of approximately 30 per cent. on the previous year's figures. The above weights are remarkable when the severe shortages of fertilizers and farm labour are taken into consideration. Wool figures show a total of 982 bales clipped, and increase of 83 bales on the previous year.

The average number of workmen employed was 135, and grants from the Consolidated Fund amount to £18,899, a decrease of £1,057 on last year's figures. With these funds the Department was able to subsidize work of a capital nature on marginal lands in addition to providing a reasonable standard of living for farmers on properties not yet self-supporting.

The total cash receipts for the year from all sources amounted to £96,402, as compared with £82,310 last year.

Housing

Owing to shortage of materials and labour very little housing on scheme properties was carried out during the year other than minor repair work. During the year, however, under the Special Housing Fund and Housing Act, eleven houses were erected and three purchased and renovated. The recent appointment of a Building Supervisor, and the organization of staff to cope with building construction, will enable progress to be made more rapidly.

Rehabilitation

Few inquiries for rehabilitation assistance were made by ex-servicemen in this district. Ample Maori-owned lands of a suitable quality are available, and as the demand becomes greater and fertilizer and other materials become available development of these lands will provide a solution to this problem.

Waiariki Maori Land Board District

Work in connection with development activities has been confined mainly to the maintenance of existing properties and to increasing their production.

Receipts by the Department have increased since last year from £247,564 to £290,115, and while development operations last year showed a net liability of £800,640, to-day the amount is £762,016.

Wool production has been increased during the past three years with 2,075 bales in 1942-43, 2,082 bales in 1943-44, while this year the total bales were 2,318.

The numbers of stock carried this year compared with 1935 (in parentheses) indicate the vast improvement in the carrying capacity of the Native lands under development in this district: 17,153 (9,915) dairy stock of all classes; 1,206 (465) working horses; 10,385 (3,942) run cattle; 102,413 (28,000) sheep, of which 49,959 are breeding-ewes.

In 1935, cash receipts from all sources totalled £29,000 while the total this year has reached £290,000.

In Ruatoki, the largest settlement of farmers in the Rotorua district, many of the unit accounts are now in credit, and while these make periodical withdrawals to meet items of farming expense, they prefer to make many purchases from their own funds. There have been no requests from Ruatoki for the Department to release lands from the development scheme, and this is a gratifying sign that settlers have confidence in the departmental administration in matters affecting their lands.

At Horohoro, keen interest has been shown in farm finance and the tribal committee of that area has co-operated with the Supervisor in an endeavour to readjust the position of those farms where the personal element has placed the holdings in an unsatisfactory position. With the contemplated granting of tenures at Tikitere and Horohoro, a better understanding should be introduced and the outlook made favourable for those farmers who desire to succeed. The efforts of these can be whole-heartedly applauded, and they are encouraged by the Department's officers to view the future with optimism.

A special committee of investigation toured the Coast district during the present year and dealt with many of the contentious problems that had been causing dissatisfaction in the minds of the units of the coastal belt. The complaints received were mainly founded upon misunderstandings, and it