

### *Native Housing*

The continuing labour and material difficulties have confined our activities to those of an urgent or essential nature covering, in the main, work necessary to prevent deterioration in health or reduction in farm production. To some extent difficulties were avoided by the purchase of existing dwellings, and the year's activities resulted in a betterment of conditions in nineteen cases, comprising the purchase of six houses, the erection of eleven, and the renovation of two. Farm buildings necessary to the maintenance of production were erected as required.

During the latter part of the year, and in accordance with departmental policy, the organization necessary to increase the scope of the building activities has been established. Such extension of organization covers both field and office, and its success will be gauged by the manner in which the expected influx on work is dealt with. Such influx, it is anticipated, will arise due to various causes, including the release of labour and materials, rehabilitation, and the more complete utilization by the Maori people of the advantages accruing under the provisions of the Native Housing Act.

### *Rehabilitation*

Large areas of undeveloped Maori land, more particularly in the Tuwharetoa area, have great potentialities for the settlement of Maori ex-servicemen of this district. Immediate settlement is impracticable under existing circumstances, but on the necessary machinery, materials, and fertilizer becoming available, together with an appropriate allocation of man-power, results already obtained on this class of country justify optimistic forecasts that further settlement will prove a success. In the initial stages of development these lands should also provide an avenue for training inexperienced men who indicate a preference for settlement on the land. With this object in view the necessary planning will receive immediate attention, thus avoiding delay when conditions are favourable. The only avenue for immediate settlement on fully or partly improved areas would be those lands formerly under lease which have reverted to the owners.

### *Ikaroa and South Island Maori Land Board Districts*

Owing to the schemes in this district being situated in a large area of country extending to both Islands, very great changes in climatic conditions are experienced on individual projects. Taken as a whole, the year 1944-45 has not been a good season as far as farming activities have been concerned. In the South Island, bad weather has been general, and at Wairau the wet conditions which prevailed during the late winter and early summer culminated with a flood on the 19th January. The flood waters flowed over the top of the stop-bank at various places and resulted in the loss of 12 acres of peas, 11 acres of potatoes, and 10 acres of oats. In Southland, wet and cold conditions were prevalent throughout the spring and extended up to Christmas. Grass and crops were thus slow in getting away. Considerable rain in March seriously interfered with the harvesting of oats, but produced an abundance of feed. In the Wairarapa and Manawatu districts, weather conditions were not favourable, but they were not abnormal, and the same applied to the Hastings district, although during shearing operations and grass-seed harvesting a bad spell of wet weather was experienced, resulting in a difficult period with some losses.

In spite of adverse conditions, small but steady progress has been made throughout the district, reflecting credit on the supervision exercised—in the North Island by the field staff, at Blenheim by the Commissioner of Crown Lands, and at Invercargill by the Chief Surveyor, Lands and Survey Department. Butterfat production is up some 8,000 lb., this result being obtained from a lower number of cows milked than the previous year. The output of wool is up 35 bales, and from the sale of live-stock approximately the same figures as last year were realized.

In these difficult war years it has been the policy to consolidate and maintain the development that has already been reached. Owing to the shortage of labour and certain materials no major capital works have been attempted, and although conditions appear to be gradually improving, it will be some time yet before normal development can be carried out. In the meantime, progress cannot be as rapid as could be desired, but steady development will be aimed at until conditions return to normal.

### *Housing*

The year under review discloses a further increase in the contribution towards the improvement in the living conditions of the Maori people. During the year six houses were erected and renovated in the Ikaroa District and four in the South Island. In addition, sixteen houses were purchased for Maoris in the Ikaroa District. Construction of houses has been impeded to some extent by the limited materials and labour available, but it is confidently anticipated that as conditions gradually improve and supplies of material and labour become available, the construction of dwellings will be considerably stepped-up.

An endeavour has been made to maintain the periodic inspection of houses completed in previous years, and any necessary maintenance and repair work has been carried out.

The number of applications being received for advances for housing is increasing each year as a result of the encouragement being given to Maoris to lodge applications for immediate investigation, in readiness for the contemplated expansion of building activities as conditions return to normal.