

areas farther south so that the required relief could be given. Fortunately, the hay produced by the various blocks was almost sufficient to satisfy the supplementary feeding that was necessary and provide the dry winter fodder. This reasonably satisfactory situation would not have been possible had it not been that the winter was a mild one.

All blocks are feeling the absence of a reasonable allocation of superphosphate. This has resulted in the weakening of pastures and a resultant easing of carrying-capacity.

By far the greatest problem that has been faced during the year is that of ex-servicemen settlement. With very few exceptions this branch is erecting the houses and other necessary improvements on the areas set aside for settlement of ex-servicemen. This work is up to date, and the programme that was envisaged at the beginning of the year will be put into effect. In one or two cases the allotment has had to be postponed owing to the failure of the pastures to adequately recover, due to drought conditions.

The various Electric-power Boards appreciate the need for electrical reticulation of areas set aside for settlement, and everything has been done by the Boards concerned to make the power available.

A big problem is facing this branch in respect to deferred maintenance, particularly in regard to fencing and drainage. During the war years the lack of labour was responsible for the normal programme not being carried out. However, it is hoped that when the class of labour required becomes available for this work the maintenance will be speeded up.

Lambing has been up to the usual standard. All stock is in good condition. Revenue from sales has been slightly in excess of that anticipated.

During the year Brouchs, Otoru, Aria, Part Pururu, Part Mapara, Part Ellicotts, and Patoto Blocks were allotted to ex-servicemen, while Bentons and Pratts Blocks were allotted to civilian tenants and Bains was amalgamated with Pururu Block.

*Aria Block* (413 Acres), (Locality : Aria).—This property, consisting of two dairying sections, was settled by ex-servicemen in July, 1945.

*Arohena Block* (4,130 Acres), (Locality : Arohena).—Although dry weather prevailed during the summer months, this condition was, however, beneficial to the block. Both live-stock and crops have done particularly well. Conditions were most suitable for noxious-weed control. The ewe flock has been increased from 2,000 to 2,500. A total of 1,795 acres is in permanent grass.

*Atua Block* (618 Acres), (Locality : Arapuni).—This block was purchased for settlement of ex-servicemen in June, 1945. The scheme of settlement provides for six dairying sections and the erection of five houses, cow-sheds, and other buildings ; also the necessary fencing and installation of an adequate community water-supply. All the work has almost been completed. Possession will be given to the successful applicants in July, 1946.

*Burns' Block* (139 Acres), (Locality : Te Rau-a-Moa).—This section was originally reverted bush land badly infested with ragwort. Noxious weeds are now under control and the pastures are well consolidated. Throughout the past year a dairy herd has been milked on the bonus system, and settlement will take place in July, 1946.

*Ellicott's Block* (746 Acres), (Locality : Te Awamutu).—The major portion of this block, consisting of four dairying and five sheep sections, was settled by ex-servicemen in July and October, 1945. The balance of 729 acres is being improved preparatory to further settlement. Fencing and the establishing of adequate permanent pastures is being pushed ahead. This block was reticulated with electric power in 1945.

*Foss' Block* (438 Acres), (Locality : Pukeatua).—This country is of a very light pumice nature and has suffered from lack of manure. Careful management and additional manure will be required to bring the pastures up to standard. Thirty-three acres of pasture have been renewed this year. A considerable portion of the fencing is now in a condition requiring renovation. Eight hundred breeding-ewes and 60 breeding-cows are to be wintered, and an increase in ewes is contemplated the following year. Owing to the possibility of securing the suitable sheep sections, it has been decided to continue development operations for some time yet.