

enabling many farmers to "weather the storm" up to the present, and it is unfortunate that curtailment of expenditure, particularly in travelling-expenses, is tending to break that connection between instructor and farmer which is most essential to efficient service.

EXPERIMENTAL FARMS AND AREAS.

Puwera.—This farm has continued to be run as an ordinary dairy-farm, although experimental work has been conducted thereon. Financial considerations, however, have restricted this work, which has been confined almost entirely to investigations regarding the value of nitrogenous fertilizers, observational phosphatic top-dressing plots, and rotational grazing. It is doubtful whether any further useful work can be conducted on Puwera, and I think the proposal that this farm should be relinquished and handed back to the Lands Department is a good one.

Marton.—This area, which was reduced during the year by some 30 acres handed back to the lessor, has been confined almost entirely to work of an intensive technical nature, and has been conducted by the specialist officers engaged in grassland research work. This work has consisted mainly of rye-grass strain trials, manurial trials, and the technique connected therewith.

Ashburton.—The experimental farm at Ashburton was closed down during the year, and in lieu thereof an area under the control of the Director of the Plant Research Station was established on a piece of ground leased from Canterbury Agricultural College, at Lincoln.

Gore.—Experimental and investigational work has been carried on on this area during the year. A separate report will be submitted later.

Galloway.—The farm at Galloway which was used to prove the feasibility of dairying on irrigated country, having fulfilled its usefulness, was closed down as an experimental area during the year and handed over to the Lands Department for settlement.

Waimaunga.—This farm, on which dairying was the main function, was, like Galloway and Ashburton, also disposed of to the Lands Department.

Subsidized Farms.—The four subsidized farms situated at Stratford, Manaia, Dargaville, and Winton respectively have continued as in the past to do much useful demonstration work in the districts in which they are situated.

RUAKURA FARM OF INSTRUCTION.

This farm experienced a change of Manager during the year due to the death of Mr. H. Munro, who had managed the place for some years past. Mr. Munro's death was greatly to be regretted. The gross income of the farm shows a decrease as compared with the previous year, due entirely to a decline in the values of farm-produce. On the other hand, the expenditure was kept as low as possible, and the saving in expenditure more than counterbalanced the decrease in receipts. The income from the dairy herd was practically the same as for the previous season. The milking of a few more cows than during the previous year offset the lower price received per pound of butterfat. The annual sale of pedigree stock was held in August, 1931. Competition was keen, and prices realized were above general ruling rates. This must be viewed as satisfactory.

Ruakura Farm Training College.—This college continues to be popular with farmers and others who have sons eligible for admittance. The accommodation has been fully occupied.

BOYS' AND GIRLS' AGRICULTURAL CLUBS.

Owing to a reduced vote being available for expenditure in connection with boys' and girls' agricultural club work, it became necessary during the year to revise our views on this work and to limit the operations as much as possible rather than to encourage the movement. However, quite good work was done in those districts where the clubs have been in operation in the past. A certain amount of expenditure was saved this Department through a decision that no refund was to be made of the travelling-expenses of agricultural instructors attached to Education Boards when travelling on boys' and girls' club work. There is no doubt that the work performed by these clubs is of very great value from an agricultural-instruction viewpoint, and the curtailment of operations owing to financial stress is one which we would like to see overcome if possible.

LAND-DEVELOPMENT SCHEMES.

As indicated in my report for the year ended 31st March, 1931, the land-settlement policy of the Government has created a considerable amount of extra work for this Division, particularly for the Fields Superintendent of the Auckland District. In addition to supervising the development work on Ngakuru Blocks 1 and 2 and Ngakuru No. 2 Extension, near Rotorua, the Superintendent mentioned has inspected and submitted special reports relative to quite a number of additional areas which the Lands Department had in view for development and settlement. The development work on the Ngakuru Blocks mentioned has proceeded very satisfactorily, and has now arrived at the point where certain sections have been selected, and dairying will be commenced on them during the coming dairying season. During the past year dairying was carried out as a demonstration on one of the areas, and the results obtained under the circumstances are satisfactory.

In addition to the development work carried out on Ngakuru, as above mentioned, some work has also been done on pakihi land near Westport. Slightly over 60 acres have been sown to grass, and the ability of this land to stand up to grazing throughout the year can now be tested.