

Commissioner of Small Farms was appointed by the Lands Department during the year, and his office took over the Small-farm Plan work which had hitherto been carried on by the Division, thus enabling greater attention to be given to instructional services.

One of the strong features about instructional services is that so far as possible officers are given facilities to deal with the inquiries on the farm. It is this personal contact between the officer and the farmer that is essential to efficient service by way of advice and instruction. The districts controlled by each Instructor are extremely large, and with the increase in demand for instruction and advice the work is now even more than the staff can satisfactorily cope with.

EXPERIMENTAL FARMS AND AREAS.

Marton.—The work conducted on this property has been confined almost entirely to that of an intensive technical nature, and has been carried on by the specialist officers engaged in grassland research work.

Gore.—Owing to financial exigencies this area was closed during the year, and was finally handed back to the lessees on the 31st March, 1934. Although the closing of the area has in some degree meant a diminution of experimental activities in eastern Southland, arrangements have been made to conduct much of the experimental work previously carried out on the area on a co-operative basis with farmers in the district.

SUBSIDIZED FARMS.

The farms of this nature located at Stratford, Manaia, Dargaville, and Winton respectively have continued during the year, and, as in the past, much useful demonstration work in the respective districts in which they are situated has been undertaken.

A similar demonstration area at Katerc, near New Plymouth, has proved its worth to the district. The work undertaken there is almost entirely confined to the improvement of pastures.

RUAKURA FARM OF INSTRUCTION.

The pastures on the Ruakura Farm of Instruction have produced fairly well during the year. Ample feed was available for the stock during winter and early spring. An area of 112 acres was top-dressed with superphosphate in the autumn of 1933, 130 acres during the spring of 1933, and a further 118 acres in the autumn of 1934. The rainfall in the Hamilton district, where Ruakura is located, was much below average, being only 39.34 in., as against an average yearly rainfall of 50.17 in.

The annual sale was held at Ruakura during the month of August, and although a fairly large number of people attended competition was not extremely keen. The prices obtained for the stock were low, due entirely to the slump conditions existing. The prices, however, were much on a par with those obtained at the annual sale in August, 1932. Thirty-four yearling bulls were disposed of at an average price of 13½ guineas, while in 1932 thirty-seven yearling bulls realized an average of 14½ guineas. The demand for pigs at the commencement of the year was not very keen. Later in the year, however, a fair demand set in for Berkshires and a keen inquiry came for Tamworths, but the Large White breed was not much sought after. Prices realized for pedigree pigs at the annual sale were very disheartening, the average price being 4.30 guineas, as against 4.32 guineas in 1932. While the prices obtained in 1932 and 1933 were much on a par, they were considerably below the average price obtained at the 1931 annual sale, when it was 7.74 guineas. With the milk-production herd the maximum number in milk for the year was 120 in November and December, and finished up with 101 cows in the shed at the end of March. The actual quantity of butterfat sold was greater this year, but, unfortunately, the average price received was less, being for 1933-34 8.83d., as against 9.47d. in 1932-33. The position with regard to the flock sheep at Ruakura is satisfactory, and increased prices were obtained both for lambs and wool.

Ruakura Farm Training College.—For the current year the accommodation at the Ruakura Farm Training College has been full, and it speaks well for the regard in which this College is held when this position obtains notwithstanding the bad time that the country has been going through. The general health of the students at the College throughout the year has been good.

BOYS' AND GIRLS' AGRICULTURAL CLUBS.

A further successful season of work in connection with this movement has again to be recorded. This is all the more pleasing in view of the reduced assistance granted by the Department to the movement. The fact that the value of boys' and girls' clubs is appreciated is exemplified by the donation to the majority of clubs of seeds and manures by merchants dealing in these commodities. As in the previous year, the Department's assistance was confined to the provision of stationery, a small monetary grant to the old established clubs, and, as far as time and circumstances would permit, to the judging, more particularly the judging of the root plots.

LAND DEVELOPMENT SCHEMES.

During the year the Division has in certain districts carried out a considerable amount of work in connection with the land-development policy of the Government. This applies more particularly to the Auckland District. In this district the development of the Ngakuru Blocks, the Galatea Estate, and the Whangamarino Block has been carried on. In the case of Ngakuru, it has been demonstrated that that particular class of country can be satisfactorily farmed as small dairying farms, and during