

work develops so the need arises for establishing storage and works depots in central localities in order to obtain and maintain adequate custody and delivery of materials and equipment.

Constant attention is being given to the establishment of housing advances on a satisfactory long-term basis not only for the purpose of meeting increased building costs, but also to provide improved housing standards. This is particularly necessary in considering the requirements of large families as related to the limited financial resources of such applicants. Applications for housing in town and suburban areas have shown a marked increase, thus presenting problems in the provision of loans sufficient to meet the costs of higher standards of construction and design necessary in such areas. Consideration is also being given to the question of rental housing in town areas where Maoris have become established in permanent industrial employment.

While the progress on housing operations has been restricted owing to factors confronting the building industry as a whole, the technical and administrative machinery has been gradually developed to meet the requirements of a heavier programme of work which will be evident immediately conditions in the industry become easier. Although the houses completed for the year have been less in number than might be desired, the steady growth of the organization is apparent when it is considered that the work in progress at the end of the year amounted to almost double the year's return for completed dwellings, with about thirty building teams operating.

During the year under review a total of 102 houses were provided, while the total number of dwellings provided for Maoris up to 31st March, 1945, was 2,553.

H. P. R. Mason

Native Minister.

STATE DEVELOPMENT SCHEMES

Tokerau Maori Land Board District

The Tokerau District embraces the whole peninsula north of Auckland, and therein dwell a quarter of the Dominion's Maori population. The population is fast increasing, thereby adding to the responsibilities of the Department in its administration of Maori affairs. The development of Maori lands is providing a useful solution to the economic problems of many of these people and is creating a new interest among them as ancestral lands become developed and are made productive. Dairying is the main avenue for bringing the land to a self-supporting stage.

Vigorous progress in land development has, however, been retarded by wartime exigencies, such as lack of fertilizers, shortage of farm labour, and restricted use of farming materials, but despite disappointments and set-backs it is very pleasing to report that a notable increase in butterfat production has been recorded this year. The total yield of 2,069,999 lb. of butterfat from Maori unit farms financed by the Department shows an increase of 407,749 lb. or approximately 25 per cent., above last year's figures. On the whole, the season under review has been favourable to dairy-farmers. Copious summer rains produced an abundance of feed in practically all districts and production reached a considerably higher peak than was the case last season, when a very dry spell set in early in the season. Another factor has been that the dairy herds are generally in good health and should enter the winter months with a better chance of combating serious diseases.

Individual Maori farmers under the control of the Department number 817, while, in addition, 16 large stations or comprehensive schemes are operated. A number of these comprehensive schemes at present depasturing sheep and cattle are suitable for closer settlement and when subdivided could in some cases, be made available for rehabilitation of Maori ex-servicemen.

Employment promotion grants during the year accounted for £32,279 marking a decrease of £2,634 on last year's figures. This amount has provided sustenance and work for a monthly average of 291 farming units and full-time workmen.

Wool production has been kept to last year's level. The total of 451 bales clipped reflects an increase of 3 bales as compared with last year's clip of 448 bales. In the main these wool clips were produced from departmental stations, as very few individual Maori farmers in the North Auckland district run sheep, dairy-farming being the predominant occupation.

During the year it was necessary to call for an investigation and report from the Director of Animal Research Division, Department of Agriculture, to inquire into the menace of tape-worms and fly trouble amongst the sheep on Waireia Scheme, where fairly heavy losses had occurred. The treatment prescribed was carried out, but although an improvement has been shown, the fly trouble is still persistent this season. The results of the measures taken in combating the tape-worm menace will not be apparent until later.

The result of the 1944-45 Ahuwhenua Trophy competition shows the entrants well up to standard. One competitor at Takahue secured third place. The judge of the competition especially commended this competitor for the striking transformation of his property from standing bush to good grazing land with very limited financial assistance.

Housing

During the year the Department took over from the Public Works Department the construction of houses for Maoris in this district, and a Building Supervisor has been appointed for the North Auckland area. A great deal of leeway has to be made up in connection with erection of houses for Maoris in this district, and numerous recommendations have been forwarded for approval. Under the development scheme, twelve houses and sixteen cow-sheds were erected during the year. This does not include houses built by other branches of the Department's activities, for under the provisions of Special Housing Fund and Housing Act nine houses were erected and three more purchased and renovated for the occupation of mortgagors.