

The labour strength at the close of the year was 1,730 (1,630). The number has not yet reached one-half of the average number (3,500 men) provided for under the original plans, but a recruitment drive inaugurated about the close of the year has since yielded very encouraging results.

Acquisitions of land—for consolidation of existing forest areas or for provision of exotic forests in timberless districts—totalled 11,700 acres, and the total area acquired since 1940 is now 97,300 acres. The area under negotiation for acquisition totals 63,500 acres. In keeping with the policy of planting no land which is suitable for farming, two blocks purchased in timberless localities are to have the farming land demarcated and taken over by the Lands and Survey Department for farm settlement.

Progress in providing additional accommodation for employees, whether married or single, is described in paragraph 56. Appendix X lists the forests on which expansion is planned.

99. *Export Butter-box and Cheese-crate Pools.*—For the year ended 31st March, 1948, the deliveries of timber for butter-box manufacture to North Island boxmakers licensed under the Export Butter-box and Cheese-crate Pool Regulations 1941 again decreased, and totalled only 1,999,000 board feet (4,169,000). Shipments from the South Island comprised 648,000 board feet (1,574,000), made up of 97,000 board feet of white-pine and 551,000 board feet of rimu. The balance of the timber received, consisting of 1,202,000 board feet (2,446,000) of white-pine and 149,000 board feet (149,000) of rimu, was secured from North Island mills. The depletion of white-pine stands and shortage of shipping has again made it difficult to secure butter-box timber for the North Island from west coast South Island ports.

The following figures illustrate the decline in production of timber for butter-box manufacture :—

		Year Ended 31st March, 1941.	Year Ended 31st March, 1948.
		Bd. ft.	Bd. ft.
White-pine received in North Island from west coast	..	9,500,000	97,000
Total timber delivered for butter-boxes in North Island	..	27,500,000	1,999,000

Details of boxes supplied to North Island dairy companies during the past year are as follows: standard wooden boxes, 552,000 (926,000); "Saranac" type (fibre-board mats and wooden ends), 923,000 (1,242,000); corrugated kraft fibre-board cartons made in New Zealand from Canadian liner, 261,000 (549,000); kraft fibre-board cartons from Scandinavia and United States of America, 4,430,000 (1,732,000): total, 6,166,000 (4,449,000).

At 31st March, 1948, stocks of all types of export butter containers held by dairy companies totalled 1,519,000 (615,000), and ships in New Zealand waters or *en route* to the Dominion had an additional 1,300,000 on board. Dairy companies lack storage capacity to hold all of the containers as they arrive, and use is being made of central stores to hold the surplus. The forward supply position appears to be very favourable.

During the year the supply of export cheese-crates to dairy factories was recorded at 1,137,000 (1,168,000), of which 174,000 (181,000) crates were manufactured by South Island crate-makers.

No crates were shipped to North Island dairy companies from the South Island. Deliveries of timber to North Island cheese-crate manufacturers totalled 10,500,000 board feet (10,020,000).