

2. PROPOSAL FOR MARGINAL LANDS BOARD

(i) CONSTITUTION OF BOARD

We recommend the appointment of a Marginal Lands Board constituted as follows :—

- (a) Four permanent *ex officio* members : the Minister of Lands (Chairman) ; the Director-General of Lands (Deputy Chairman) ; the General Manager of the State Advances Corporation ; and the Director-General of Agriculture.
- (b) One member appointed by the Minister of Lands for a period of five years who is a leading authority on grasslands development in this country. In this matter we recommend to the Minister consideration of the appointment of Mr. Bruce Levy as the first appointee under this section.
- (c) Two members appointed by the Minister of Lands for a period of five years, from a panel of names recommended by the Sheep Industry Board (or, pending the establishment of such a Board, by the Wool Board in consultation with the Dominion Council of the Meat and Wool Section of Federated Farmers) of persons with outstanding knowledge of the farming of difficult hill country.
- (d) One member appointed by the Minister of Lands for a period of five years to represent the lending institutions, to be selected from a panel of names submitted by the Associated Banks and the Stock and Station Agents' Association.
- (e) One member appointed by the Minister of Lands for a period of five years from a panel of names submitted by the New Zealand Workers' Union to represent farm workers on marginal lands.

(ii) SECRETARIAT

The secretariat of the Board to be provided from the Lands Department.

(iii) FUNDS

The legislation making provision for the constitution of the Board should also provide for the opening of a Marginal Lands Account from which advances can be made for the purposes of the Board. We envisage that very substantial sums will be required before any considerable improvement can be effected to marginal lands, but it is obvious that comparatively small amounts only will be expended in the first year. The whole question of availability of labour and materials must be taken into account in financing schemes, as it will not be desirable in all interests to authorize more than a limited amount of work in any year, otherwise there might be a tendency to divert labour and materials from other non-marginal lands. It is suggested that for the first year the sum of £250,000 should be transferred from the Consolidated Fund as the first contribution to the Marginal Lands Account. This will enable the Board to commence its activities, and at the end of the first year the position can be reviewed, when the Board will be in a position to estimate its further requirements. We should stress the fact that large sums will eventually be required, and in the national interests it is most desirable that they should be provided for the purpose of rehabilitating marginal lands.

(iv) POWERS

The powers of the Board should be made sufficient to enable it to carry out the scheme of work recommended for it.