

### LOANS FOR THE PURCHASE OF FERTILIZER.

20. In the previous report it was stated that the Government had made available to the Board for administration a sum of £100,000 to assist farmers to purchase fertilizer on easy terms, and the conditions upon which loans were to be made were set forth. The demand for assistance was not as great as had been expected, and from 1st July, 1931, to 31st March, 1932, loans totalling only £11,034 were made from the fund. The fund was made available only for the financial year ended the 31st March, 1932, and the Government having informed the Board that no further moneys were to be made available after that date, the granting of loans was suspended. £782 was advanced by the Board prior to 1st July, 1931, so that the total advances from the fund amounted to £11,816. Several companies and firms assisted their clients and suppliers to obtain loans from the special fund by providing the 50 per cent. guarantee required as one of the alternative conditions to the granting of loans.

### CO-OPERATIVE RURAL INTERMEDIATE CREDIT ASSOCIATIONS.

21. One further association was formed during the year—the Mangonui Association, with headquarters at Kaitaia. The Board's consent to the registration of this association was given on the 6th July, 1931, and registration was effected on the 5th August, 1931. The total number of associations formed and in active operation at the end of the year was forty-one. Since the end of the year two further associations have been formed—the Central Hawke's Bay Association, with headquarters at Waipukurau, and the Mercury Bay Association, in the Mercury Bay district. Proposals are on foot to form further associations in other districts throughout the Dominion. As was mentioned in the previous report, the existing conditions have militated against the formation of additional associations, but it is anticipated that as soon as conditions improve the movement for the formation of associations will receive renewed support from the farming community.

22. *Conferences of Associations.*—During the year it was found possible to arrange two regional conferences of representatives of associations. The Board considered that the expense of holding a general conference for the whole of New Zealand would not be justified, and it was decided, therefore, to arrange regional conferences embracing districts having community of interest. The first conference was held at Hamilton on the 7th March, 1932, and was presided over by Mr. J. N. Massey, M.P., a member of the Board. There were also present representatives of all the associations in the Waikato and South Auckland districts, the members of the Waikato District Board, the Deputy Commissioner of Rural Intermediate Credit (Mr. J. Snell), and the District Intermediate Credit Supervisors, Auckland, Hamilton, and Te Aroha, who are responsible to the Board for the control of the associations in the districts represented. A large volume of business has been transacted by the associations represented at the conference, and there is no doubt that the discussions which took place proved of value to the associations which were represented, and will increase the efficiency of the system in those districts. The associations appreciated the opportunity of discussing questions on which doubt or difficulty existed and of making suggestions at first hand to the representatives of the Board. The second conference was held at Palmerston North on the 4th June, 1932, and was presided over by Mr. Norton Francis, C.M.G., a member of the Board. There were also present representatives of all the associations operating in the Taranaki, Wanganui, Manawatu-Wellington, Wairarapa, and Hawke's Bay districts, the members of the Manawatu-Wellington District Board, the Deputy Commissioner of Rural Intermediate Credit, and the District Intermediate Credit Supervisors controlling the associations in the districts represented. Some of the associations had transacted a large volume of business, and the experience of their directors was most valuable in the consideration of any points of difficulty which arose during the discussion. The opportunity of attending the conference was greatly appreciated by the association representatives, and the results achieved should equal in importance and value those achieved at the Hamilton conference. As a result of the representations made at the conferences, the Board has been able to agree to extend