

The Department's supervisors have been kept busy controlling and advising Native units in the conduct of their holdings and in the general supervision of Native unemployment activities. Supervisors report that Natives are anxious to learn the finer points of farming practice and that the best results are obtained by close supervision of their efforts. Unfortunately, the time at the disposal of officers has not always permitted the full demonstration of scientific methods, which are essential in obtaining the best results.

The properties directly under the control of the Department, generally speaking, are in a satisfactory state as far as pastures and cultivation are concerned. Weather conditions in the district have not been normal, and excessive rainfall and consequent flooding of low-lying areas has resulted in damage to improvements and in stock losses. The roads in some districts were badly impaired, and a good deal of unemployed labour was utilized in repairing flood damage.

In certain of the far northern districts, large areas of Native lands are unsuitable for general farm development. The question of afforesting these areas is receiving consideration, and reports are being obtained as to suitable trees and areas. This is particularly so at Te Hapua, where a remnant of the Aupouri tribe resides.

Native opinion in the district is favourable towards the Department's development schemes, and it is realised that, with the progress of consolidation, means are available for turning previously neglected areas into profitable holdings. In some districts there is a shortage of suitable land which serves to intensify the problem of settling the large Native population. It seems certain, however, that development in the North will most probably proceed in the direction of rendering assistance to individual farmers rather than in large scale development operations on extensive areas.

The following summary compiled from District Office returns shows the progress of development during the year under review on the four main schemes :—

Item.	Mangonui.	Hokianga.	Bay of Islands.	Kaipara.	Totals.
Total area under development as at 31st March, 1936	13,198 acres	17,335 acres	25,192 acres	5,298 acres	61,023 acres
Total area in grass (area temporary pasture not available)	7,090 acres	12,398 acres	11,315 acres	2,299 acres	33,102 acres
Area sown during year ..	186 acres	1,513 acres	980 acres	137 acres	2,816 acres
Number of units	175	235	212	55	677
Dependants—					
Adults	394	602	538	127	1,661
Minors	603	1,080	723	185	2,591
Fencing—					
New	1,464 chains	3,682 chains	1,888 chains	521 chains	7,555 chains
Repairs	144 chains	642 chains	302 chains	15 chains	1,103 chains
Draining	1,216 chains	1,109 chains	1,406 chains	92 chains	3,823 chains
Ploughing	181 acres	222 acres	506 acres	51 acres	960 acres
Clearing—					
Bushfelling	43 acres	907 acres	372 acres	52 acres	1,374 acres
Scrubcutting	256 acres	395 acres	426 acres	75 acres	1,152 acres
Stumping	1,258 acres	1,500 acres	616 acres	23 acres	3,397 acres
Live-stock as at 31st March, 1936—					
Dairy cattle—					
Bulls	132	246	171	40	589
Cows	2,580	4,275	3,957	985	11,797
Heifers	534	883	979	170	2,566
Heifer calves	434	811	649	130	2,024
Sheep	646	714	..	1,360
Horses	194	304	197	10	705
Working bullocks	38	122	42	..	202
Receipts for year (Department's proportion only usually one-third)—					
Butterfat	£4,154	£5,196	£5,005	£1,408	£15,763
Other	£89	£117	£470	£46	£722

Motatau Base Farm.

This is the main farm of the North, comprising 780 acres of Native leasehold land, and being located at Pokapu, near Otiria. Since its inception as a scheme under development operations its primary function has been to facilitate the distribution of dairy stock for unit farmers in the Bay of Islands and Hokianga districts. The block may now be also regarded as a successful dairy farm, the herd consisting of 131 head, together with 65 run cattle, while the return of butterfat for the past season was 14,148 lb., which produced £670. As a subsidiary to the dairying, 29 pigs were on the farm at 31st March, 1936, while 27 were sold in the course of the past year for £57.