

when completed and the ragwort with which the block is heavily infested is controlled this area should make two attractive holdings. Many years of careful pasture management with adequate control of stock is required, however, before any settlement of the area could be wisely considered.

Mangati Block is now carrying 315 ewes, 840 dry sheep, 33 breeding-cows, and 85 dry cattle.

#### TAHAIA BLOCK (105 ACRES).

This was an abandoned Crown security which had almost totally reverted to scrub, fern, and gorse when work was commenced by the Small Farms Board in 1939. Since then all the boundary fences have been renewed and subdivisional fences erected. Practically all the scrub and gorse has been cut and the areas cleaned up and sown in grass. The old run-out pastures, which are heavily infested with ragwort, are to be gradually used as swede ground and so replaced with new grass.

This winter for the first time a small flock of ewes is being run as a control measure.

Though only a one-man farm, this area has every promise of being successful.

#### TAPUWAE BLOCK (3,328 ACRES).

This block was purchased by the Land Purchase Board in 1930, and at that time, with the exception of 100 acres of grass, practically the whole area was in standing milled bush. Control was originally exercised from New Plymouth, but in July, 1938, it was decided to bring the area under the Land Development Branch in Te Kuiti, which was handling other areas in the vicinity.

Since then stumping and logging up has been proceeded with, as it was found that the initial fertility from the bush-burns was rapidly declining, and it became essential to top-dress and regain control on the steeper faces and also to provide swede ground for the winter months.

The area is situated some 2,000 ft. above sea-level and is typical pumice country which, before the advent of licks and top-dressing with cobaltized super, was definitely "sick."

This has now been completely overcome, and a test of breeding a flock and carrying the same through to when they were cast as four- and five-year ewes was successfully terminated this year.

Tapuwae will winter 2,900 ewes, 1,850 dry sheep, 245 breeding-cows, and 500 run cattle.

#### VINCENT'S BLOCK (195 ACRES).

This was an abandoned section not far distant from Otorohanga which had deteriorated very badly when it was decided to take it over for development.

The land is in the main very light in quality, and one of the major problems is to get sufficient consolidation in establishing permanent pasture.

Development work has now, with the exception of some minor improvements, been completed, but the block requires careful pasture and stock management before it could be classified as a finished job.

This winter the carrying-capacity will be 390 ewes, 360 dry sheep, 33 breeding-cows, and 20 dry cattle.

Situated in a good locality, the future of this block as a single holding is bright, but patient handling of this light land is still essential.

#### WAIHUKA BLOCK (2,319 ACRES).

Three properties go to the making up of Waihuka Block. The whole area when work commenced in 1938 was a mass of fern, scrub, tutu, and on parts logs and stumps. The land varies in quality, but is chiefly the light pumice country encountered around Waimiha. Considerable progress has been made, and already there is in grass an area of 1,200 acres. In addition, the grassed area has been well fenced. A wool-shed, yards, and dip have been erected, and a considerable amount of draining and additional clearing effected. To-day the area, though the grass is far from the peak of its possibilities, is carrying 550 ewes, 680 dry sheep, and 50 run cattle, while during the spring and early summer additional control stock was made available.

A lot of work remains to be done, and even when this is completed further extended stock and pasture management will be required before any of the area could be alienated by way of settlement. Nevertheless, the future prospects of this country with good stock management and top-dressing with cobaltized super are quite promising.

#### WAITANGURU BLOCK (9,918 ACRES).

This block is an amalgamation of various contiguous properties in the Mairoa and Waitanguru districts. The setting-aside of the various areas for small-farm purposes represents twenty-three separate transactions involving areas ranging from a few acres to over 1,800 acres spread over a period of seven years.

Work was first commenced in 1934, and has since been followed with considerable interest by all those aware of the early promise of this country, which was followed so rapidly with almost complete reversion and abandonment.

Development is still proceeding, and although the area is well fenced grass to date is only some 5,000 acres, the present carrying-capacity is 2,600 ewes, 7,670 dry sheep, and 1,070 cattle. Seven years ago the Small Farms Board stock in this area numbered 90 steers and 300 wethers.

Despite the past difficulty of breeding their own replacements of sheep in this district, it is now being shown that under proper grassland management plus cobalt that there is nothing to fear in handling this country. Nevertheless, control in this district, with its annual rainfall of 100 in., is exacting, and any relaxing of one's grip on developed areas is fatal.

Time alone will show when this control can be relaxed sufficiently to allow of settlement, but there is ample evidence that this vast area of more or less doomed country can be farmed with excellent results.