

"*Matanuku Downs*," 1,709 acres 3 roods 38·7 perches, was purchased from Mr. T. M. Chambers on the 30th May, 1940. Its location is two miles from Tokoroa Township and dairy factory and twelve miles from Putaruru. The land generally is easy ploughable, with steeper faces not exceeding 50 acres in extent. The soil is of fair-quality loam overlying light pumice and does not readily dry out. It takes grass well, grows good root crops, and responds rapidly to good farming. At the date of purchase 1,450 acres approximately were in grass varying in age from one to fifteen years, and 210 acres were in crop or fallow. The vendor was carrying 800 head of one- to four-year-old cattle, 1,200 breeding-ewes, 200 dry ewes, and 1,000 wethers, but with reasonable manuring the pastures can be considerably improved, and the stock-capacity increased accordingly. Adjoining farms are carrying one cow to 2 acres.

*C. N. H. Worker's* property, 495 acres 3 roods, lies directly across the road from "*Matanuku Downs*," with which it has been grouped for the purposes of working. Although somewhat broken, the property is all ploughable, with the possible exception of 50 acres. It has been well farmed in the past, and the improvements, all of a permanent nature, are in good order. The pastures are somewhat better than those on "*Matanuku Downs*," and the fencing is exceptionally good. The vendor was running 1,000 ewes, 260 hoggets, and 20 head of run cattle, but the ultimate utilization for subdivisinal purposes will be dairying.

*E. W. R. Leslie's* 739-acre property, which adjoins "*Matanuku Downs*" on the opposite boundary to Worker's, was taken over on the 1st October, 1940. This is a good place, lying nicely to the sun and containing 700 acres of easily ploughable country. It has been well farmed, and the pastures, covering 525 acres, are in good heart. The soil appears to be above the average for the district. It is estimated that six subdivisions will be obtained without further roading. The Department will retain control meantime with "*Matanuku Downs*" and Worker's.

*K. S. Cox's* property of 1,301 acres 1 rood 2 perches at Lichfield, near Putaruru, was purchased on the 3rd March, 1941. About 278 acres are in good grass, the balance being unimproved. The country is easily worked, responds well to manure, and grows good root crops. Development will occupy about three years under normal conditions.

*Motunau Estate*, 2,925 acres, which was acquired in January, 1941, from the trustees in the will of the late Constance Byrch, is situated eleven miles from the Motunau Post-office and about sixty miles north of Christchurch. The estate comprises good, warm, fat-lamb country, and is practically all ploughable. The vendor's annual cultivation programme was totally inadequate, and as a result the pastures were for the most part poor, and an extensive programme of regrassing will be necessary. On subdivision, from five to seven economic sheep-farms will be obtained.

*Valetta-Tinwald Areas*.—By the end of the year the Board had completed the purchase of ten properties forming a more or less compact group for development into irrigation units. The total area involved is 7,268 acres 1 rood 32 perches, and it is all within the boundary of the Valetta-Tinwald Irrigation Scheme, which will be put into operation on completion of the essential work on the Rangitata Diversion Race at present under construction by the Public Works Department. Water is expected to be available in about twelve months' time. The size of the holdings to be provided on subdivision will be decided after a study of the effect of irrigation water, liming, and cultivation on this type of land.

*Chetnole Estate*.—In September, 1940, the Board completed the purchase from Messrs. Chetnole Ltd. of approximately 766 acres of the Chetnole Estate, near Glenavy, South Canterbury. The portion taken over comprises flat land, mostly good heavy soil (drained swamp), and 25 acres light to stony country. Although the area has been extensively tile-drained considerable further improvement can be effected by additional draining and cultivation. Irrigation water is available from the Waitaki River. A subdivisinal scheme providing for seven sections has been drawn up on the assumption that the future utilization will be dairying, cropping, and seed-growing. While remaining under departmental control Chetnole will be capable of supplying a considerable quantity of grass-seed to meet requirements on other blocks.

*W. H. Cochrane's "Spurhead"* property contains 2,212 acres 2 roods 36 perches, and is situated at Edendale, Southland. Possession was taken on the 31st March, 1941. The land consists of easy undulating light clay loam resting on fairly free deep clay subsoil. The property had not been heavily cropped, and is in such a condition that it will respond readily to top-dressing. The pastures both good and poor had been understocked over a long period, and in consequence had badly deteriorated. Considerable development work in the nature of fencing and regrassing will have to be undertaken prior to settlement, but it is estimated that about six good economic sheep-farms will ultimately be available.

Although all these properties were purchased by the Dominion Land Purchase Board under the Land for Settlements Act, 1925, they were handed over at the 31st March, 1941, to the Small Farms Board for further improvement in accordance with the Government's decision to provide for the settlement of discharged soldiers under the Small Farms Act, 1932–33.

The number of offers actually considered by the Dominion Land Purchase Board during the year, following inspections by Field Officers, was 103, involving a total area of 249,568 acres. The fact that there were not more actual purchases was due solely to the unsuitability or excessive price of the majority of the properties offered.

Tables are attached giving particulars of the properties considered and land acquired during the year, including purchase-prices, together with a Statement of Receipts and Payments.

I have, &c.,

R. G. MACMORRAN,

Land Purchase Controller.

The Hon. the Minister of Lands.