

The Paratu Block, of 2,020 acres, near Walton, was purchased for the settlement of discharged servicemen. This area in the past has received a very low application of fertilizer, and it is anticipated this will affect farming operations.

All blocks were farmed with sheep and cattle during the year and, favoured with a good season for pasture growth, the results were generally satisfactory. The inadequacy of the fertilizer-supply, however, makes for difficulties.

On Mihi Block labour from the National Service Department's camp has been of much assistance, but shortage of materials has hampered progress. On three sub-blocks the new grass is being maintained in fair condition, but on Strathmore the pastures, owing to reduced fertilizer, show a decided deterioration, necessitating a reduction of stock.

On the Galatea Estate the main work has been carried out with defaulter labour. Here, again, pastures have deteriorated due to lack of fertilizer, but the farming returns have been kept at a satisfactory level by the provision of supplementary fodder.

*Superintendent of Land Development, Te Kuiti.*—The blocks under the control of the Superintendent number thirty-seven, totalling 66,076 acres, after allowing for certain alienations and increases. Included in this area is a block of 572 acres at Raetihi leased to the Department of Agriculture for the growing of vegetables.

Roughly half of the total area being developed is in grass, the remainder being still undeveloped, and, with minor exceptions, must remain so until labour, plant, and manure are available in sufficient quantities to warrant an extension of the development programme.

The number of employees engaged on the thirty-seven blocks has again been reduced during the year, and those now employed total only 125. The areas controlled from Te Kuiti stretch from Ohakune to Hamilton, and some of the blocks are an amalgamation of smaller areas. The number of men employed, therefore, leaves little room for maintenance work on fencing and draining.

Sixteen dairy herds were maintained in production, but the dry season, coupled with the shortage of manure, has resulted in a definite drop in revenue from butterfat, pigs, and fat stock.

No increase of any moment has been made in the ewe flocks or the run cows this year, and none is visualized until more manure can be allocated.

The drought experienced during the summer occasioned a good deal of alarm in respect of eczema, and the possible failure of the swede crop, but excellent rains in late February and March rectified the position. The winter-feed position promises to be up to expectations.

Completion of the purchase of two blocks of land in this district, totalling approximately 1,820 acres, for the settlement of discharged servicemen will be finalized shortly. In addition, two blocks, one in the Aria district and one some distance from Otorohanga, which have been developed and farmed by the Department for some years are in the process of being subdivided, and made ready for early settlement by discharged servicemen.

There are three blocks in this district—namely, Kairangi, Karakariki, and Wharepapa—which were taken over in 1938 from the Waikato Land Settlement Society. This body still acts in an advisory capacity in all matters regarding these blocks. During the year five settlers were permanently established on the Wharepapa Block. This makes a total of thirty-five men established to date on these blocks. The settlers generally have shown that they can make good, provided ample fertilizer is available.

*Commissioner of Crown Lands, North Auckland.*—There is only one area, Batten's Block, of 1,576 acres, under the Commissioner's control, and further development work has been checked owing to the difficulty in providing suitable labour, combined with the general shortage of top-dressing manures. Returns from this property for the year have been satisfactory.

*Commissioner of Crown Lands, New Plymouth.*—Two abandoned Crown securities, containing 1,287 acres, are the only areas being developed under the control of the Commissioner of Crown Lands, New Plymouth, and they are being farmed and held for future disposal. Owing to labour shortage, one man has been managing both areas, and it has been impossible to run breeding-ewes on both properties, with a consequent drop in returns.

*Commissioner of Crown Lands, Napier.*—Five areas in this district are under development—Kakariki, Kahaka, Waihau, and Parinui Blocks, approximating 31,798 acres, and the Ahuriri Lagoon, of 7,753 acres.

Following on a dry autumn, winter conditions were harder than usual, but the summer was unusually wet, and flush conditions now prevail, with good prospects for the winter. Owing to labour shortage and restricted supplies of fertilizer, little new development work could be undertaken, and operations have been confined mainly to the maintenance of present pastures. Scrub reversion has been evident on areas not top-dressed.

So far as the Ahuriri Lagoon is concerned, development operations have been limited. A new lucerne stand of 25 acres has been laid down, and existing pastures and other improvements have been well maintained. A satisfactory wool-clip was obtained, and good returns made from the sale of fat stock. From January to March the rainfall was fairly heavy, and present conditions are flush. There has been a big increase in the natural cover, and the winter carrying will be considerably greater than last year.

*Commissioner of Crown Lands, Gisborne.*—The Te Wera Estate, of 9,922 acres, is the only block under development in this district. It was acquired in 1927, since which date it has been developed and run as a station. To date an area of about 1,900 acres of bush land has been felled and grassed. A standard flock is established, and the surplus sheep and cattle are always in keen demand. The use of cobaltized salt on this country is reflected in the appearance and stamina of the stock.

*Commissioner of Crown Lands, Wellington.*—Experimental development has been undertaken on an area of 100 acres of Crown land at Tangimoana. The area is holding the pasture, and a small ewe flock is run. Present conditions prevent any extension of operations.

*Commissioner of Crown Lands, Blenheim.*—Two properties are under the control of the Commissioner of Crown Lands, Blenheim, the first being a fully-developed orchard property of 68 acres, and the other Molesworth-Tarndale Station, containing 239,500 acres.

The Torode's Estate is a fully-developed orchard, and operations were confined to seasonal work. The past season has been a fair one, and it is anticipated that production will equal the previous season's total of 9,600 cases.