

owing to high rainfall and prevalence of fern and ragwort. Settlement at the present time is not practicable without prejudicing further development and the control of poorer pastures. Eighty-two acres, mostly limestone outcrops, was included in an adjoining scenic reserve.

*Watson's Block* (1,051 acres), six miles west of Waitomo Caves. The developed portion has been maintained in good condition and will be made available for settlement by an ex-serviceman in the near future. The undeveloped portion of the block is in bush and will be reserved.

*Wharepapa Block* (balance, 3,143 acres), acquired from the Waikato Land Settlement Society, is in the Wharepuhunga district, eighteen miles south-east of Te Awamutu. Five civilian settlers have been established for some time, and this year nine of the remaining ten sections have been occupied on a wage basis, eight by ex-servicemen selected by ballot for the sheep-farms, and a small-farm settler who is milking on the bonus system. Practically all the development work is complete, and only a small amount of renovation remains to be done. It is intended to fix charges on five of the ex-servicemen's sections in June or July next, when the charges of the small-farm occupier on the dairy section will also be fixed. Pastures severely affected by last year's drought have been reconditioned by over-sowing, and are improving rapidly with increasing supplies of manures, and it is hoped in 1948 to fix charges on three more of the ex-servicemen's sheep units. The remaining unit will be settled about a year later.

*Whataroa Block* (balance, 577 acres), located ten miles west of Te Kuiti, on Troopers' Road. Seven dairy sections were allotted to ex-servicemen in June, 1946. Another dairy unit is to be offered for selection in June, 1947. Of the balance of the block, approximately 400 acres is swamp country which cannot be developed at the present time. Extensive drainage operations will be necessary, this work being under the control of the Mangapu Drainage Board.

*Whatauri Block* (balance, 277 acres), twenty-two miles south-east of Te Awamutu. Two ex-servicemen who last year milked herds on wages with dairy production bonus had their charges fixed in July last. Preparation of the remaining two sections for settlement is well in hand, the work done during the year including fencing, grassing, and extension of the community water-supply, which also serves part of Wharepapa Block adjoining. Two cow-sheds and one dwelling are under construction, and will be complete in July next, when a ballot will be held to select two ex-servicemen. They will be employed for one year on wages with a dairy bonus, charges to be fixed in 1948.

*Whatawhata Block* (301 acres), in the Whatawhata district, on the east bank of the Waipa River. The block was subdivided into three dairy-farms, which were allotted to ex-servicemen in July last. The road access to one section has been improved by the Public Works Department during the year.

#### *General Report on Position and Progress of Established Civilian Settlers*

Accounts for the civilian settlers established on the Kairangi, Karakariki, and Wharepapa Blocks, originally acquired from the Waikato Land Settlement Society, are kept at this office.

Thirty-five accounts were open at the beginning of the year, but during the year four of the settlers sold their farms to returned servicemen financed by the State Advances Corporation, and one sold his section to a civilian who obtained financial assistance privately; all the sections are held on a restricted freehold tenure.

Of the remaining thirty sections, one small one is to be merged with another small holding in the near future. Six of the settlers were unable to meet their half-yearly charges in October, 1946, owing to the unfavourable dairy season of 1945-46, but much more favourable conditions prevailed in the past autumn, and all arrears were paid on the 1st April, together with current charges.

The accounts demonstrate that the remaining twenty-nine settlers are well established on small farms which are capable of producing a good income under sound management. Generally speaking, the control of ragwort is being tackled effectively by the settlers.