

The details regarding the various schemes commenced and in operation in the Waiariki Maori Land District at the 31st March, 1932, are given hereunder. The schemes may for convenience be divided into two groups, corresponding to the official organization for the purposes of supervision and the keeping of accounts, the first group comprising the schemes at Tauranga, Rotorua, and Taupo, and may be called the Rotorua Group; and the second those which extend eastwards from Whakatane to Cape Runaway and southwards from Whakatane to Ruatahuna, and may be called the Bay of Plenty Group.

THE ROTORUA GROUP OF SCHEMES.

Dealing with the first group, the details are as follow :—

(a) HOROHORO DEVELOPMENT SCHEME.

After the passage of the Native Land, &c., Act of the 1929 session the Native Minister met the owners of the Horohoro Block at Ohinemutu on the 29th November, 1929, when they agreed that their lands should be brought under the provisions of section 23 of the new Act, and that a portion of the land should be offered to selected men from Wairoa, Hawke's Bay. The total area was 8,343 acres, but it was estimated that not more than three-fifths could be developed.

On the 21st January, 1930, the party of Wairoa Maoris, half of them returned soldiers, under the leadership of Tupara Rotoatara, who had held a commission as lieutenant in the Maori Pioneer Battalion, left Wairoa for Horohoro. At the same time eight men of the Ngati-Tuara and Ngati-Kearoa sub-tribes, who owned the Horohoro Block, were selected by the owners to occupy and develop a portion thereof. During the first week of February a commencement was made, the party from Wairoa occupying from the centre of the block southwards and the eight men from among the owners occupying the northern portion. A topographical survey was made of 3,000 acres, showing tentative subdivisions into 100-acre farms. A wage-rate was fixed on a sustenance basis of 9s. a day, as against the then Dominion rate of 12s. 6d. to 14s. a day.

Actual development commenced on the 7th February, 1930. The method of cultivation was to mow the scrub and fern, and, after burning, to work up the ground with disks and harrows drawn by a caterpillar tractor, sow in grass, and apply a top-dressing of lime and superphosphate in the proportion of 5 lime to 2 super and at the rate of 5 cwt. to the acre. The area thus prepared by the Wairoa men and sown in grass before the end of March, 1930, was 187 acres. The community lived in tents with their wives and families until the building programme could be proceeded with.

The Ngati-Tuara or northern section of the scheme commenced with eight men, but the work there was not properly organized until the beginning of the next financial year. It was then that Raharuhi Puriri, their leading man and one of the largest owners in the block, was released from the position of manager for Mr. R. L. Levin at his Tokerau farm on Lake Rotoiti to act as foreman and to control the development of the tribal land. This man was well fitted by experience of farm work, by his position among his people and by personal character, to act as leader, and he has fully justified his position.

The programme during the next financial year, 1930-31, was on a much larger scale, and was pursued vigorously on both sections of the scheme. Tractors and implements and motor-trucks cost up to the end of March, 1931, the sum of £3,085. Over 1,700 acres were cleared, ploughed, manured, and sown in grass; five and a quarter miles of internal access roads were formed, oil-barrels being used in the construction of culverts; a fair amount of fencing was carried out, and a large area planted in potatoes. In regard to buildings several cottages, two of considerable size, and one store-shed were erected. A feature of the settlement was the sudden expansion of the population, which with men, women, and children reached to over one hundred souls during the year. The need for a school building was recognized, and pending the construction of a proper building school was conducted in a marquee, the teachers living in tents.

The treatment of the undeveloped land with disks and harrows was continued, but on areas covered with tussock it was found more economical to plough and work up. The lime-super mixture at the rate of 5 cwt. to the acre for new ground and 3 cwt. for the second course of top-dressing was found to be effective and reasonable in cost. The response of the soil treated in this manner was very encouraging, and sufficient for the purpose of establishing good pasture for dairying.

Fencing-posts purchased from Europeans, who acquired them from Maoris of the northern Taupo districts, who split the posts on their own land, cost delivered at Horohoro the sum of £9 per hundred. This price was considered excessive, and steps were taken to secure command of an area of bush containing sufficient supplies of suitable timber, which could be developed by some of the settlement men. This matter is referred to in detail under the caption "Waipapa Bush." It is sufficient to note here that the arrangement has brought about a reduction of nearly £3 per hundred in the cost of totara posts, and assured a supply for all requirements of the schemes operating in the Rotorua district.

At the end of 1930 the Haira family, which owned nearly one-third of the Horohoro Block (being the whole of the frontage to the Rotorua-Atiamuri Road) but had so far held aloof from active participation in the scheme, decided to submit fully to it. One member of the family sold his undivided interest to the Crown for the purposes of the scheme. This in due course enabled the Department to reorganize the scheme in four sections with frontage to the aforementioned road.

The expenditure to the 31st March, 1931, details of which are given in the attached schedule, amounted to £18,512. Of this, £3,085 was accounted for by the purchase of motor trucks, tractors, and implements; £2,125 by the cost of buildings and accommodation; and £1,180 the cost of cattle.

During the financial year 1931-32 the development programme on the Ngati-Tuara and Ngati-Kahungunu sections of the scheme aimed to complete the grassing, fencing, and general equipment of as many allotments of the block as possible, in order that dairying might be commenced in the following year. This involved the erection of more cottages for settlers, the ring-fencing of allotments that had been grassed, the purchase of heifers, the saving of hay and the sowing of swedes for the future herds. The hay saved in the summer and autumn of 1931-32 was 400 tons, and 125 acres were sown in swedes.