

The most important operation, however, was the consolidating of the new pasture land by tramping with heavy cattle. From the end of November, 1931, to the middle of May, 1932, store bullocks were grazed over all parts of the block that had been cultivated and grassed. Wethers were grazed with or in front of the cattle to compel the latter to tramp over the whole surface, and thus compact the light pumice soil. This treatment was calculated to establish the permanent grasses and clovers and to improve the sward. Following this heavy stocking the grassland was top-dressed with the mixture referred to. The further story of the treatment and its results fall into the current financial year.

In May, 1931, the purchase of the freehold of 772 acres at Waikaukau, bounding the Ngakuru Block on the north, was completed after negotiations extending over a year. This block is traversed by the Waikaukau Stream, and contains marshy land, which when drained would carry the best of grasses on land with a good iron content, an asset in an area that might be affected by bush sickness. The block, moreover, extends from the main Rotorua–Atiamuri Road to what is known as Bryce's Road on the east, and gives a connection with a large Native area, known as Kapenga. The possession of it will bring into the scheme of subdivision an area of 1,200 acres south of the lands owned by the Haira family, and thus provide allotments for an additional number of settlers. It was decided to introduce another contingent from the Wairoa district, where the earthquake of February, 1931, the drought of that summer along the East Coast of the North Island, and unemployment were producing much distress. In June, 1931, ten young men, mostly from Nuhaka, were brought to Horohoro and placed on the new block, which became the Waikaukau section of the Horohoro scheme.

The titles to subdivisions of the Horohoro Block contain many owners with small interests, who live in Hawke's Bay or in the Rangitikei and Manawatu districts. Many owners living in the Rotorua, Tauranga, and Taupo districts were not interested in development, and desired to sell. It was therefore decided as a step preliminary to the reorganization of the scheme, and in view of the near approach of the locating of settlers on dairy-farms, to purchase the interests of such owners as desired to sell.

It is proposed eventually through the application of the provisions of the Native Land Act relating to the consolidation of interests in land to arrange that settlers, who are owners, shall have allotments into which the values of their interests may be aggregated; and that settlers, who are immigrants from other districts, shall occupy as Crown tenants, to be nominated as such under authority contained in the Native-land-development legislation.

Thus during the financial year 1931–32, in addition to the active development programme, steps were taken to put the titles of the would-be settlers in order. The Horohoro scheme was organized in four sections as follows: (i) Ngati-Tuara, 19 allotments; (ii) Ngati-Kahungunu, 14; (iii) Waikaukau, 20; (iv) Tuhourangi, 21: total, 74 allotments.

The programme of roading, fencing, and general development was arranged in accordance with these divisions, and as far as possible the accounts were made to fall into line.

Position as at the 31st March, 1932.

The progress of this scheme may be reviewed as at the end of March, 1932, after it had been two years and four months in operation. The expenditure on all four sections of the scheme to that date was £34,114, details of which are set out in the schedules. The results achieved to offset this expenditure may be tabulated as follows:—

Particulars.	Ngati-Tuara Section.	Ngati- Kahungunu Section.	Waikaukau Section.	Tuhourangi Section.	Total.
Number of units in occupation	17	15	10	8	50
Number of allotments	19	14	20	21	74
Reserves	2	1	2	1	6
Area subdivided Acres	2,135	1,500	1,555	1,910	7,100
Area grassed	1,116	860	..	325	2,301
Area ploughed for crops	70	85	..	33	188
Area cleared ready for cultivation .. ..	..	252	441	245	938
Fences erected Chains	1,546	1,384	..	618	3,548
Buildings Cottages	16	12	..	..	28
Roading Chains	76	40	60	..	176
General road access .. ..	..	..	..	..	440
Shelter-belts .. ..	..	187	..	..	187
Hay saved Tons	200	200	..	50	450

This, the pioneer scheme of the pumice belt, was able to show at the end of its second year for an expenditure of £34,114 sufficient enclosed pasture for twenty-three settlers and ground prepared for eleven more; cottages for twenty-eight families; nearly eight miles of internal roading to give access to all projected allotments and formed without assistance from the Public Works Fund; ring-fencing and subdivisional fencing amounting to 44½ miles; nearly 2½ miles of wide shelter-belts, double-fenced; 450 tons of hay, and 152 acres of swedes in readiness for dairy herds; and a selected farm population of fifty men, of whom more than half were in occupation of surveyed, grassed, and enclosed allotments, secured to them without ballot as the result of arrangements among themselves, and approved by the local organization of the Native Department. The total population of men, women, and children numbered nearly one hundred and forty, and so healthy were the conditions under which they lived and worked, although for nearly two years most of them were housed under canvas and their children taught in a marquee, there was not a single death among them up to the end of March, 1932.