

In regard to the 180-acre piece called Okahu, and the areas at Tikitere and between Tikitere and Lake Rotoiti, it was decided to introduce a colony of men from the Ngati-Porou Tribe of the East Coast to provide much-needed leadership in the work of development. The contours of the country, which is broken by several gullies and pockmarked with steam holes and mud springs, and the great variety of surface cover, fern, gorse, broom, blackberry, light to heavy manuka, and light bush, presented problems in development, which required an experienced, disciplined, keen, and industrious group of men to meet and surmount. Men were selected for experience in all branches of farm work, with emphasis on expert knowledge of fencing, of all cultivation operations, and especially of dairying. Rapata Karaka (Bob Clarke), one of the best dairy-farmers of the Waiapu district, was appointed foreman at the head of a colony of seven of his fellow-tribesmen. In addition to four expert fencers and experienced dairy-farmers there were two students of Hawkesbury College, who had gained diplomas in dairying and agriculture, one being a qualified herd-tester and buttermaker. Four of the party were good ploughmen, and all were keen and hard-working.

Unemployed Maoris of Mourea and Taheke were also employed on this part of the scheme scrub-cutting and roadmaking. Reporting on the 31st March, 1932, the Farm Supervisor summed up the work done on this part of the scheme:—

320 acres (including 70 acres of heavy gorse land) cleared, stumped, burnt, ploughed, and worked up. The stumping and grubbing were very heavy, and at one period over 50 men were employed; 250 acres of this area were ploughed, grassed, and top-dressed, and 70 acres were sown in swedes;

124 chains of access road to the Otutatarā Valley;

131 chains of drains formed, 97 being through heavy, marshy, log-strewn land;

Water-supply (ram-driven), with 60 chains of pipes, and a concrete reservoir;

Buildings—Two cottages, one stable, and feed-shed;

156 acres top-dressed;

And stumping, clearing, and ploughing were in progress in the Otutatarā Valley.

The expenditure on development to the 31st March, 1932, on all sections of the scheme amounted to £6,992, not including the cost of lands purchased. The details are given in the accompanying schedules. Up to that date the progress of development may be summarized as follows:—

						Acres.
Land in good pasture	..	..	..	..	..	628
Land in swedes	..	..	..	..	..	70
Land in rough pasture	..	..	..	..	..	400
						Chains.
Fencing: New, 1,633 chains; repairs, 170 chains	..	..	..	..	..	1,803
Road access	..	..	..	..	..	124
Draining	..	..	..	..	..	131

And buildings, water-supply, and cultivation work were in progress as already mentioned. Dairy stock and draught horses accounted for £587, equipment for £339, while £211 was paid for rent and rates on various blocks included in the scheme. The heaviest item in the expenditure was for fencing, the labour and material which came to charge up to the 31st March, 1932, reaching £2,199.

The covering of Rotomahana mud from the Tarawera eruption over the greater part of the surface of the Tikitere lands has made it very responsive to cultivation and manuring. The cost of development is likely to be higher per acre than in the case of the schemes on the Rotorua-Atiamuri Road, but production should be greater and the after-treatment less expensive. As an example of the fertility of these lands, it may be mentioned that one of the Okahu paddocks, containing 80 acres, which was laid down in pasture by the former occupier, Mr. Vaughan, many years ago and was treated with 3 cwt. per acre of the lime-super mixture in the winter of 1932, has been able to carry from the end of September, 1932, to the end of January, 1933, 165 yearling Jersey heifers and eight bulls, and 300 four-tooth wethers. At the end of January the grass had got away and patches of ragwort were in flower, showing that even with this heavy stocking there were not enough sheep to control the ragwort. The strike of newly sown grasses in paddocks fronting the Rotorua-Opotiki Road is remarkable, and in the Otutatarā Valley, fronting Lake Rotoiti, a pasture is in course of establishment, which will be equal to the best in the Rotorua and Bay of Plenty districts.

(g) TAHEKE.

The Taheke Blocks subject to the Taheke Development Scheme were listed in the schedules to G.—10, 1931, the total area being 15,745 acres. This scheme has been financed from the funds of the Waiariki Maori Land Board, the expenditure, details of which are submitted in the accompanying schedules, amounting at the end of March, 1932, to £13,069. The scheme is mentioned here because, although State funds have not been involved, it has been officially brought under the provisions of section 23 of the Act of 1929.

(h) MAKETU.

At the 31st March, 1932, what is known as the Maketu Development Scheme, was organized in three sections as follows:—

					A.	R.	P.	A.	R.	P.
(1) Maketu Farm	..	..	..	..	1,078	0	33			
Pukaingataru	..	..	..	..	126	1	15			
								1,204	2	8
(2) Te Puke	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	422	2	2
(3) Motiti Island	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	852	0	1
Total area	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	2,479	0	11