

(1) *Maketu Farm.*

This farm takes its name from the village and peninsula of that name, famed in Maori history as the landing-place of the Arawa canoe, whence members of her crew colonized the coastal lands and penetrated to the region of the thermal springs, and even to Taupo.

The nucleus of the present Maketu Farm consisted of lands which had been sold to Europeans. The Arawa Tribe had gravitated towards Rotorua and lost its grip on the coastal lands. When the settlement with the Crown over Rotorua and other lakes in the thermal springs district was effected in 1922-23 and the Arawa Trust Board was established to administer the annual fund of £6,000 resulting from that settlement, the Board repurchased the Maketu lands sold to Europeans, and undertook the development and farming thereof. Considerable progress had been made up to 1930, at which point two dairy-farms were in operation, completely equipped and stocked. The property was well subdivided, and a good water-supply had been installed, which ministered to one-half of the dairyable area. Half of the farm was fully improved, but there remained much in rough pasture, poorly watered and infested with ragwort and gorse. The consolidation of titles was on the point of completion, which was calculated to bring about an aggregation of the Board's purchases, as well as an adjustment of the interests of Maori families, which had not sold their lands.

During 1930 the Board found it impracticable to carry on the development of its estate or to assist in the development of sections outside the holdings of the Board, but which were owned by members of the Arawa Tribe living at Maketu. During 1930 the effects of the depression reached Maketu and other areas on the Bay of Plenty coast, so that the Native population, which had been able to secure employment on public works, in the flax swamps or timber-mills, or on the farms of European farmers, was thrown on its own resources. Under the circumstances the Trust Board asked the Native Minister to assist the Board in carrying out a programme of development, involving a large sum, by which unemployment might be relieved. The Native Minister was not prepared to do this, unless the full control of the farm was transferred to the Native Department, free of liability for capital expenditure up to the time of transfer, but subject to the investigation of some of the outstanding debts of the farm and the acquisition by the Department of such dairy stock, implements, and material on hand as the Department might think fit. The Board agreed to these terms on the 14th October, 1931, and steps were taken to adjust accounts and to bring the Maketu lands under the provisions of the development legislation.

These provisions were applied on the 18th December, 1930, but the adjustment of accounts was not completed until the 8th August, 1931. The Department secured any expenditure from the Native Land Settlement Account by a first charge on the assets of Maketu Farm, which were unencumbered. The Minister, in reviewing the position of this property in relation to surrounding Native lands, was of opinion that it would form the nucleus of a larger scheme, comprising lands at Te Puke, at Pukaingataru, and as far east as Matata. Maketu was central to this area, and might be developed as a base farm for the district, serving it in the matter of dairy stock of good quality, and as an example of efficient farm methods. Young Maoris of the Arawa Tribe could receive their training on the farm and later find openings elsewhere in the Arawa district.

While the improvements effected on the farm rendered it attractive, the lands not controlled by the Board, which fronted the main road and surrounded the Village of Maketu, were shabby and unkempt. The following is a note made at the end of 1930 :—

" Maketu is at present a medley of irregular tracks, half-formed roads, old and decrepit buildings, noxious weeds, ancient fruit-tree groves, swampy patches, and sandy foreshores. A general tidying up is badly needed. Besides the development of the land in the ordinary way for farming purposes, some scheme is required for carrying out general improvements in the way of roading, provision of water-supply, building, and beautifying generally. This should enhance to a considerable degree the value of the Maketu lands, including the Trust Board's farm. Maketu is a spot which, not only from its historic interest but from its situation on the sea-coast close to shell-fish supplies and seaside-camp sites, attracts people from the inland lake region. The all-round improvement of the Maketu area should increase its attractions, from which the development scheme should derive benefit."

The policy pursued at Maketu since the Department assumed control has followed closely on the lines indicated in the last paragraph. Grants have been made from time to time for relieving unemployment through piece-work, the contracts comprising the construction of short access roads, the clearing of noxious weeds, and the reconditioning of fences, as well as development work on the farm.

The expenditure to the 31st March, 1931, was £1,844, of which £870 was for dairy cows and heifers purchased from the Arawa Trust Board, £335 for fencing material, £382 for further development, £94 for fertilizers, and the balance for maintenance and sundries.

During the ensuing financial year, 1931-32, the expenditure was increased to £8,667 gross, or, after deducting sales of sheep, pigs, butterfat, and other produce amounting to £1,508, to a net total of £7,159. Further dairy stock was purchased, bringing the cost of this item to £2,062; increased activity in fencing brought the cost of that item to £2,142, of which wire, posts, and other material accounted for £1,802; roading cost £386, and the purchase of sheep, horses, and pigs £416. The gross amount of expenditure included wages and other expenses for maintenance of the dairy-farms. Further development by way of building, clearing, draining, cultivating, pasturing, and top-dressing increased the expenditure on development since the Department took over the property to £2,074, or, with fencing included, to £4,216. The carrying-capacity of the farm was more than doubled, and with the method adopted of grazing sheep and bullocks in rotation with the dairy herds the pastures were immensely improved. Whereas in December, 1930, there were seventy-one cows being milked, twelve months later there were 140 and preparations were being made to increase the number in the 1932-33 season to 250.