

General.—The following is quoted from the supervisor's report :—

- “Representation has been made to the Department to have this property subdivided and units established, but as the property is far from being fully developed I consider it would be a mistake for this to take place. The country is difficult to hold even when run as at present, but if cut into small sections it will be impossible to control. To enable a good pasture to be established it is necessary to first plough. A good deal of the country already surface sown is fast becoming covered with heather, and it will be necessary to plough and resow before one may expect any good returns to be derived from these areas. Probably the best method of bringing in the ploughable areas of this country is by first growing a root crop. Of the available labour, none of the workers have horses or implements and, during the past year, it was necessary for units from Ruatoki scheme to do the team work. The question of top-dressing will also be somewhat difficult owing to the lack of horses for the purpose of packing. It may be necessary in the near future to go into the question of purchasing a team of horses and employing a teamster all the year round.
- “It is considered that in time to come any building-sites within the vicinity of the sea-front will be very valuable, and as there is quite a demand for such sections it is thought that the Department should ensure that no land be disposed of for this purpose for some time to come.”

The number of workers employed on Ngatiawa during the year was 37, and the scheme supported 67 adults and 48 children.

Ruatoki.

Situated about ten miles from Taneatua and immediately south of the Opouriao Settlement, Ruatoki is one of the major development schemes in the Bay of Plenty district. The scheme maintains a population of 300 adults and 434 children belonging to the Tuhoe (or Urewera) tribe, and the number of units are at present 124, of whom 119 are suppliers to the Ruatoki branch of the Opouriao Dairy Factory. The total area is 31,309 acres, of which it is proposed to develop 10,000 acres. The area laid down in permanent pasture at the 31st March last was 5,048 acres and, in addition, 1,100 acres were in rough feed or temporary pasture. Two hundred and twelve acres were planted in maize.

The absence of any pronounced drought during the year was responsible for the heavy and continuous growth of grass, but due to sunshine being below normal, the feeding value of the grass was not commensurate with its great bulk. Although the season produced a luxuriant crop of hay, much of the grass was spoiled during haymaking operations, and the supply of dry fodder for winter feed has consequently been affected. The aversion on the part of units to making ensilage is marked, and it will require much persuasion to overcome this prejudice, but nevertheless the introduction of ensilage for winter feed is most desirable, and greater areas should be devoted to this purpose. Units have been in the habit of taking their hay from the same paddock for several years in succession and, in some cases two crops per year, with the result that these pastures are deteriorating. As they were for the most part sown down in temporary feed, this result is inevitable, but, with permanent pastures now being sown, units should learn better methods of management. It will probably be most effective and least costly for units on the river flat to use a temporary mixture on their paddocks, as a short rotation will be essential so long as ragwort remains a serious menace. An extension of the area in lucerne could well be effected and would increase carrying-capacity. A small area of root crops on each section would be a factor in securing increased output, and is advocated as a method of improving the methods of husbandry.

The dairying stock on the scheme at the 31st March, 1936, was as follows : 146 bulls, 2,462 cows, 369 heifers, 273 heifer calves, and 192 working-horses. The bulls and the majority of the young cows introduced through the scheme are of a good type, and when mature the latter promise to be reasonably good producers. Some sections are overstocked with unprofitable stock through the failure of the units concerned to cull at the proper time, and a special endeavour is being made to clear these culls as soon as possible. Stock generally is in good condition, and should come through the winter in good order. Some bad cases of mammitis have been encountered, and deaths have also occurred from ragwort poisoning, tympanites (bloat), calving troubles, and cows becoming bogged in unfenced drains. The importance of hygienic measures in the control of stock diseases is receiving attention, and units are encouraged to seek assistance in the early stages.

The production per cow of butterfat, which is as follows, is gradually increasing, and this year stands at the highest figure in the history of the scheme.

| Year. | Total Butterfat. | Total Returns. | Number of Cows. | Number milking. | Butterfat per Cow. | Return per Cow. |
|---------------|------------------|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| | lb. | £ | | | lb. | £ s. d. |
| 1931-32 | .. | .. | .. | 1,010 | .. | 5 15 6 |
| 1932-33 | .. | .. | .. | 1,310 | 178 | 5 19 10 |
| 1933-34 | .. | .. | .. | 1,754 | 173 | 5 3 10 |
| 1934-35 | 261,330 | 9,626 | 2,018 | 1,707 | 153 | 5 12 9 |
| 1935-36 | 387,858 | 15,758 | 2,462 | 1,994 | 195 | 7 18 0 |