

It must be borne in mind that the milking-stock on the scheme is largely immature, and these have not reached the height of their capacity for yield. The grading for last season was approximately as follows:—

Cream: 15 per cent. super; 75 per cent. first grade; 10 per cent. second grade. Milk: 80 per cent. first grade; 20 per cent. second grade.

The greatest trouble is experienced in securing high-grade products in the flush of the season, when high night temperatures have a serious deleterious effect on the milk and cream, due to the lack of adequate cooling facilities. An advance in the direction of providing sufficient running water for cooling as well as cleansing utensils, and drinking water, is urgently required, and would be well repaid. Feed-flavour is apparent in much of the milk and cream from the Ohaua and Ngahina areas, due to the rapid growth of clover in the spring and summer months, and is responsible for the low grade of this produce. Apart from improved pasture-management, this can only be counteracted by cooling facilities. An attempt to stimulate interest in better shed and general farm-management is being made by the organization of meetings of units, at which these problems are dealt with and discussed.

Good progress has been made with the new buildings which were included in the estimates for the year under review. A lean-to implement-shed, and a small tool-shed were erected adjacent to the store-shed; 35 cow-sheds have been completed, and 6 others started; 6 cottages have also been built. Building is advancing rapidly, and no difficulty should be experienced in completing the 51 sheds and 30 cottages for which provision was made. The housing position is still far from ideal but, assuming higher prices are obtained for dairy produce, cottages may be provided in the more urgent cases, and a higher proportion of the butterfat cheque called up.

The extensive shingle river-flats and uncultivated areas higher up the river valley form ideal conditions for the spread of ragwort; on the hills, and in parts where it is difficult to control, this weed has a serious hold, necessitating effective measures on the part of settlers.

Blackberry is of minor importance on the scheme, and only a few bushes are to be found.

Work for the past year includes—

- (a) Fencing.—1,436 chains of new fencing and 1,600 chains of repairs to existing fences.
- (b) Draining.—1,442 chains of drains have been excavated and approximately 100 chains of feeding drains opened up or cleaned.
- (c) Clearing, stumping, &c.—Scrubcutting, clearing, and burning 152 acres was undertaken, together with 61 acres of stumping.
- (d) Ploughing and cultivation.—198 acres were worked under unemployment contracts, and the total area in crops on the scheme was 238½ acres.
- (e) Ragwort control.—Men were employed on the river-bed at various times throughout the summer months to apply a sodium chlorate-lime mixture to the ragwort growing on infested ground, and thus prevent wholesale spread to clean land.

The scheme is on a very sound basis. Advances on sections are well secured with a reasonable margin of safety. Units are, nevertheless, generally slow to take full advantage of the opportunity offered them to make the best use of their land, and become self-supporting as far as maintenance of their sections is concerned. They are not motivated by the aims of economic self-sufficiency to anything like the extent that these aims operate in the case of European farmers. It is therefore extraordinarily difficult to impart lasting enthusiasm for better farming methods. The tribal customs are still strong in the district, and interfere to a considerable extent with general farm work. Considering the relatively short time the scheme has been operating, this is to be expected. The response of the younger generation to the opportunities offered is disappointing in the main, one reason probably being that they are forced to work in the shed at too early an age. In the past this has meant exposure to all weathers in the rough milking-sheds, but with the improved conditions on the farm this difficulty should be overcome.

The scheme is overrun by indiscriminately-bred dogs, many of which are kept for the purpose of pig-hunting. Better control of these animals must be obtained, and the destruction of all unregistered dogs carried out.

The lack of shelter for the stock from the cold southerly winds in winter and early spring, and the prevailing north-easterly wind throughout the major part of the year, is a serious drawback to the scheme. A start has been made in the direction of remedying this difficulty, and trees planted two years ago are thriving. A programme of further planting has been planned to cover the next five years, and as much as possible should be done in the coming planting season to fill gaps in the present plantations and, where fencing material is available, to plant new shelter belts.

Due to the wet season, the high level of water in the river has precluded work being carried out on construction of groins at points designed to prevent further encroachment by floods. If opportunity offers this work will be pushed ahead immediately, and willows planted on the river-bed in an endeavour to reclaim portions of the area eroded by previous flooding.

Waiohau.

Satisfactory progress has been made during the year in the development of this scheme, which comprises a total area of 7,425 acres situated on the Rangitaiki River, about twenty-eight miles inland from Whakatane. The area in permanent pasture is 410 acres, in rough feed 100 acres, in turnips 70 acres, and in maize 50 acres. In addition, 900 acres have been cleared ready for ploughing, and it is proposed to develop in all 3,290 acres. The established pasture has thickened out into a good sward with all the ground well covered, and the beneficial result from top-dressing with 3 cwt. super. is apparent.