

Tunaeke.

Tunaeke scheme is situated about three miles from Whatawhata, the main Frankton-Raglan Road running past the property. It comprises an area of 406 acres, of which 250 acres are under active development. The land is undulating country, being all ploughable. Up to six months ago the block was practically in its virgin state of gorse, manuka, and tutu. The soil is a dark loam of good quality lying on a clay subsoil. It is warm country. A contract was let in December to plough all suitable land with a tractor. At the present time 246 acres have been cleared, and, of this area, 150 acres have been under the plough, while 100 acres were sown down in grass in March.

The scheme maintains nineteen workers, eleven adults, and fourteen children. Twelve of the workers have been brought on to this scheme from the North Auckland district. Two cottages being erected under the supervision of the Public Works Department are practically completed, while two huts to accommodate workmen have been erected. These huts are so built that later, when development is completed, they can be utilized as store sheds.

The intention of the Department is to develop and farm the area for some years as a pastoral farm, and ultimately the scheme should subdivide into six dairying holdings.

Waahi.

The focal point of development operations in and around the boundaries of the Waikato district is the Waahi scheme, which is located at Huntly and Rotowaro. It comprises an area of 575 acres, on which development is concentrated on 414 acres. The nature of 290 acres of the total block is of a sandy loam of fair quality, the balance being heavy clay country. Noxious weeds have been kept under control, and there are 334 acres in permanent pasture and 80 acres in fair grass.

Four settlers are established, one of whom is the Maori "king," whose personal influence, combined with the leadership and organization of his cousin, has contributed in no small degree to the success of the scheme. The scheme supports in all thirty-two persons. The general health of the Natives has been good, and the settlers have taken a very keen interest in their farms. The live-stock tally at 31st March was 149 milking-cows, 75 other dairy stock, 12 run cattle, and 8 working-horses.

During the past year one cow-shed and one scheme shed were erected. All the settlers now have excellent up-to-date milking-sheds, and when the water-supply has been improved it is anticipated that the dairy returns from the herd will be better. The erection of two new cottages, which are now in hand, will ensure satisfactory housing conditions within this scheme.

Waikaretu.

Comprising an area of 1,077 acres situated in the Waikaretu Valley, with a school and post-office near by, this scheme lies about twenty-six miles by good road from Rangiriri. The land is semi-volcanic loam, stony in places, all being easy-lying undulating country and practically all ploughable. At present the scheme is wholly unimproved and is infested with blackberry, ragwort, and other noxious weeds. The Department's intention is to develop an area of 835 acres on a face, and carry sheep and cattle until the land is suitable for close settlement. Ultimately it should subdivide into six holdings. The scheme should absorb all the Native labour available in this locality, for whom it has been difficult to find suitable work in the past. The land was only proclaimed at the end of the year, and development operations have not yet commenced.

Waimiha.

Situated one mile and a half from Waimiha Railway-station and midway between Te Kuiti and Taumarunui, the Waimiha scheme comprises an area of 7,829 acres. The Department has concentrated on approximately 2,500 acres, of which 2,150 acres have been grassed to date, while 5,000 acres are suitable for further development. The soil of the area under development is of a light pumiceous nature. Of the whole area, approximately 3,000 acres are flat and the balance is undulating but mostly ploughable. The area undeveloped is also of a pumiceous and light loam mixture, and generally all the land in this scheme is of poor quality and requires years of heavy stocking in order to effect proper consolidation. Heavy top-dressing is also required.

Initial development was undertaken on a block of approximately 2,200 acres generally referred to as the "Tarake" area, the total number of sections on which is twenty-four, including various plantation and other reserves. Dairy operations are being carried out on eleven of these sections, comprising an area of 1,300 acres, on which settlers have been established. The balance of the property under development has been grazed with cattle and sheep.

On the dairying sections, 290 cows were milked during the flush of the season. Milking-machines were installed in three sheds during the year.

One hundred acres of swedes, grown on the lines of the successful experiment made last year of ploughing in red clover and allowing to remain fallow throughout the winter, have proved to be an excellent crop. Two hundred and ten acres of new grass were sown during the year, of which 140 acres sown in the spring were put down with a mixture of blood-and-bone and potash, and the strike has proved to be the best the scheme has yet obtained. A further 300 acres are being ploughed immediately. This area will be allowed to lie fallow during the winter, and will be put down in temporary pastures during the spring and utilized later for swede-crops. Spring sowing of grass has been proved to be the most satisfactory in this district. Two hundred and two tons of hay were harvested and pressed into 6,054 bales.

Live-stock on the scheme included 290 dairy cows, 231 other dairy stock, 178 run cattle, 1,054 sheep, and 10 horses. The dairy cows appear to be of a good average quality, but production is