

SMALL FARMS BOARD: LAND-DEVELOPMENT.

In the report for the year 1937-38 reference was made to the fact that the Small Farms Board was concentrating on the development and reconditioning of unimproved and deteriorated Crown lands. No change of policy has been necessary, as the Board is still convinced that the type of settler in which it is interested—*i.e.*, men with experience but with little or no capital—has the best prospects of success when established on “going concerns” that have been tested under actual farming-conditions.

The bulk of the development work is being undertaken in the King-country and Bay of Plenty districts, and is under the supervision of the Superintendents of Land-development, Te Kuiti and Auckland, respectively. These two officers control 98,045 acres of the total area of 120,835 acres on which development is now proceeding, and great credit is due to them and their respective staffs for the manner in which their responsible duties have been performed and for the energy and enthusiasm displayed in this new phase of the Department's operations.

In districts where the Board's operations are limited to one or two blocks the supervision is carried out by the Commissioners of Crown Lands.

The increase for the year in the area under development—38,083 acres, approximately—is accounted for as follows :—

Area.			Block.				Location.
A.	R.	P.					
185	3	27	Addition to Kohua Block	..	..	..	King-country.
119	3	28	Addition to Edgecumbe Block	..	..	..	Bay of Plenty.
2,128	1	30	Addition to Waitanguru Block	..	..	..	King-country.
4,055	0	0	Mihi ..	..	..	..	Rotorua-Taupo.
3,306	0	0	Paeroa ..	..	..	..	Rotorua-Taupo.
2,940	0	0	Reporoa ..	..	..	..	Rotorua-Taupo.
5,400	0	0	Waikite ..	..	..	..	Rotorua-Taupo.
444	3	0	Addition to Arohena Block	..	..	..	King-country.
211	2	0	Addition to Arohena Block	..	..	..	King-country.
86	0	0	Addition to Waitanguru Block	..	..	..	King-country.
323	2	0	Addition to Arohena Block	..	..	..	King-country.
144	2	7	Addition to Arohena Block	..	..	..	King-country.
418	0	0	Addition to Arohena Block	..	..	..	King-country.
339	3	15	Addition to Arohena Block	..	..	..	King-country.
3,350	0	0	Tapuwae ..	..	..	..	King-country.
200	0	0	Addition to Benton's Block	..	..	..	King-country.
666	0	0	Addition to Mapara Block	..	..	..	King-country.
985	0	0	Addition to Waitanguru Block	..	..	..	King-country.
803	2	23	Addition to Waitanguru Block	..	..	..	King-country.
171	0	9	Addition to Arohena Block	..	..	..	King-country.
163	1	10	Addition to Arohena Block	..	..	..	King-country.
28	0	6	Addition to Pururu Block	..	..	..	King-country.
278	0	0	Addition to Mapara Block	..	..	..	King-country.
120	1	10	Addition to Paeroa Block	..	..	..	Rotorua-Taupo.
1,580	3	9	Addition to Paeroa Block	..	..	..	Rotorua-Taupo.
1,945	3	13	Kairangi ..	..	..	..	Waikato.
2,433	3	17.4	Karakariki ..	..	..	..	Waikato.
3,676	0	12.1	Wharepapa ..	..	..	..	Waikato.
364	0	0	Addition to Karakariki ..	..	..	..	Waikato.
376	0	0	Addition to Ngatamahine	..	..	..	King-country.
838	0	0	Addition to Piu ..	..	..	..	King-country.
38,083	1	16.5					

One of the major problems facing farmers in parts of the North Island is the spread of ragwort, with the resultant loss of grazing and increase in stock mortality. The Department has faced up to the position so far as its own lands are concerned, and has sanctioned an extension of the reconditioning work carried out by the Small Farms Board on abandoned Crown leaseholds which have failed to attract suitable selectors although offered on attractive terms.

On the 1st June, 1938, the Board gave effect to an agreement between the Waikato Land Settlement Society and the Crown by assuming control of the Kairangi, Wharepapa, and Karakariki Blocks, on which the Society had been carrying out development with a view to the ultimate allotment of sections to some of its “unemployed” workmen. Ten settlers had already been started on their own at the date of the change over, and arrangements are being completed for the allotment of further subdivisions before the commencement of the 1940-41 dairying season.

The board of directors of the society has been retained in an advisory capacity to ensure the faithful adherence to the original policy of the Society, which the Government has undertaken to respect.