

During the year some 750 acres of land on which the bush had been previously felled and burned was sown in permanent pasture. Sixteen miles of fencing were erected, and the area lightly grazed with sheep and cattle. Logging of the unburnt timber was carried out on 100 acres. An additional 60 acres was felled and burnt, and this will be sown when weather conditions are favourable. A considerable number of logs were hauled from the bush and milled, the timber being stacked for use when required.

Pasture establishment is in the initial stages, and consolidation with stock and control of weed-growth will be necessary for a number of years before a good sole of grass can be expected. The success obtained to date indicates that good clean pastures can be established, and that the revenue from stock will increase rapidly each year. Eight hundred and seventy-two acres of bush has been felled, 502 acres underscrubbed, 452 acres cleared, and 893 acres grassed.

Stock carried: 1,335 sheep and 155 run cattle.

Kaitia Block (1,100 Acres).

(Control: Land-development Superintendent, Auckland.)

This block is in the Kaitia drainage area, and at the commencement of development was raw peat swamp with a fringe of good-quality silt land. Drainage was commenced in 1934, and later this permitted clearing, stumping, cultivation, and grassing of the drier silt land. Additional drainage is required before the peat lands can be successfully handled, and this is being provided by the construction of a dredged outlet drain from Waipapakauri, a grant having been secured for this work.

Dairying was commenced in 1936, and last year eight herds were milked, very good returns being obtained despite the unfavourable season.

The main work during the year was designed to improve the pastures on the dairy-farms by harrowing, stumping, and drainage-improvement. Some temporary pasture was sown on the peat land, and this will be consolidated with stock and gradually improved to permit the establishment of permanent pasture.

Owing to the nature of the peat in the swamp lands, progress with this land is necessarily slow, and thorough consolidation and decomposition must precede final grassing. When grassing of this land is completed, eleven dairy farms can be established.

Work completed to date includes the erection of eleven houses, twenty-nine sheds, 2,185 chains of fencing, the construction of 2,390 chains of drains, 684 chains of road, clearing 2,372 acres, and grassing 941 acres.

Stock carried: 380 head of dairy cattle and 66 pigs.

Number of workmen employed: Nineteen.

Maoriroa Farm Settlement (Newman's Block), (522 Acres).

(Control: Commissioner of Crown Lands, North Auckland.)

Situated four miles from Broadwood, in the Hokianga County, and acquired in September, 1933, from Messrs. Newman Bros. A camp was established under the supervision of the Public Works Department for the purpose of cleaning up the reverted pasture and completing development. Seven settlers were ultimately established, and they are now milking herds of their own. The pastures have not readily responded to top-dressing, with the result that progress has been slower than anticipated. However, it has been steady, and the estimated production for the 1938-39 season is 25,000 lb. butterfat. The question of increasing the size of the holdings, which are probably on the small side, is being investigated.

Taipuha Farm Settlement (668 Acres).

(Control: Commissioner of Crown Lands, North Auckland.)

Negotiations with Colonel McCarroll for the purchase of this block were opened in 1933, and finally completed in May, 1934. The situation is a mile and a half from Taipuha, near Waiapu, in the Otamatea County.

A camp of approximately forty men under the supervision of the Public Works Department was established for the purpose of cleaning up the existing pastures, erecting further subdivisional fencing, and generally completing development.

Provision was made for seven self-contained dairy-farms, and these were allotted to class "B" tenants—i.e., men not registered as unemployed, but whose settlement would, it was anticipated, tend to relieve unemployment. Each section includes an area of rich river-flat.

During the first season approximately 100 cows were milked, but this number has now been increased to 239, estimated to produce during the current season approximately 50,000 lb. butterfat.

The individual holdings are well maintained, and the success of the tenants is assured.

Mangatele Farm Settlement (1,276 Acres).

(Control: Commissioner of Crown Lands, North Auckland.)

Situation, thirteen miles from Kaitia.

The Small Farms Board acquired this property from Messrs. Puriri Ltd., Long, and Brown in September, 1933. Nine settlers were established after development had been completed by the Chief Drainage Engineer, Auckland.