

Southland (Oraka and Kawhakaputaputa).

This scheme, containing an area of 2,500 acres, of which 1,900 acres are developed, is situated at Colac Bay, thirty miles from Invercargill. Development work carried out in the year consisted mainly of stumping, fencing, and draining. One settler was dispossessed of his holding during the year, and difficulty is being experienced in replacing him. There has been, of recent years, a gradual spread of hemlock over the Oraka reserve, and the position is becoming so acute that active steps to eradicate this weed require to be taken.

The development of this area was inaugurated and continued for the benefit of the Maoris resident in a locality where the fishing and mutton-bird industries were the principal means of subsistence. Although inexperienced, many of the settlers in the early stages of development gave every indication of becoming satisfactory farmers, but this promise has not been entirely fulfilled. A factor which militates against successful farming, particularly dairying, is that the majority of settlers continue their annual trips to the mutton-bird islands, leaving their holdings to the care of wives and children for three months in the year. The seventeen settlers and twelve labourers support eighty-one dependants.

Boisterous weather conditions during the late spring and summer held up work and resulted in poor growth, but conditions improved considerably towards the latter end of the year and feed is now abundant.

As at 31st March, 1939, the live-stock tally was as follows: 312 cows, 103 other dairy stock, 390 breeding-ewes, and 17 working-horses.

Wairau.

Located about seven miles from Blenheim on the banks of the Wairau River, this scheme comprises an area of 838 acres of low-lying alluvial flats. Negotiations for the acquisition of a further area of 167 acres have been practically finalized.

During the past twelve months no development work of an outstanding nature has been carried out as it was considered advisable to suspend operations until additional major drainage improvements had been effected. These improvements consist in the replacement of an old flood pump by a modern type, and the installation of a third pump in a position where it will be used to drain low-lying areas not previously drained. This work is now under way, and the pumps should be ready for operation this winter.

Four hundred breeding-ewes were wintered, and of these 300 will be fattened and disposed of, while 361 fat lambs were sold at good prices. In addition, 60 run cattle and 33 Jersey-cross heifers will be sold in the coming season. At the 31st March the stock depasturing on the scheme comprised, in addition to these cattle, 601 breeding-ewes and 316 dry sheep.

Harvesting operations resulted in the collection of 40 tons of hay and ten bags of dressed white-clover seed.

Weather conditions throughout the year have been usually favourable for the successful handling of this class of country.

The scheme has employed during the past year an average monthly number of eight labourers, who support twenty-five dependants.