

- (4) Irrespective of the manner in which the individual units are ultimately allotted to the occupiers, it would be fatal not to see that strict supervision is enforced following the occupation by individuals over their farming operations and care of stock. It has been proved that some settlers are apt to sacrifice the control of ragwort, repairs to fences, &c., to the desire for an immediate increased cash return, with the result that there is again a tendency to reversion. In other words, the knowledge gained from past experiences must on no account be ignored, and good husbandry in all its branches must be followed.

Rotorua District.

The blocks under development in the Rotorua district were also visited, and in this area the Committee found an entirely different set of circumstances from those pertaining in the King-country. The land being developed comprises for the most part portions of the "pumice" country, and the results in the establishment of grass on what was once a despised area were exceptionally good. The total area under development in this particular district is approximately 91,500 acres, of which some 42,000 acres are either in grass or crop. Whereas the work in the King-country entails the development and reconditioning of reverted areas, the work in the Rotorua district is the development of marginal land of easy contour. The blocks inspected were situated in various localities extending from Edgecumbe in the Bay of Plenty to Reporoa on the Rotorua-Taupo Highway. The land at Edgecumbe is what is known as the Tarawera ash country. The first attempt at development was commenced in 1931 with work on the Onepu Block, which was satisfactorily settled on completion of development work. The success achieved encouraged the development of the Tarawera Block, on which settlers have also been established, and also the Edgecumbe Block, on which development is now proceeding. These blocks lie in a good district served by rail and good road facilities, and their development is an enlightening example of what can be done on marginal land with the use of phosphatic fertilizer and by proper grazing prior to the commencement of dairying, for which purpose the land is ideally suited.

The remaining blocks visited were in the pumice area, and here again gratifying results have been obtained. As previously mentioned, the lands in this district are, generally speaking, of easy contour, and are in their natural state covered with a growth mainly of fern, tutu, manawa, and manuka. Clearing and stumping are therefore comparatively easy and not costly, and the land lends itself admirably to the use of tractors and tractor implements for cultivation, sowing, and top-dressing. Large areas can be handled at the one time, and a bold annual programme of development can be arranged. The Committee was impressed with the following salient points with regard to pumice-land development:—

- (1) The large and vital part played in the development of grassland and in its subsequent maintenance by phosphatic fertilizer;
- (2) The need for the light and judicious grazing by cattle of the pasture during the humus-forming and consolidation period, and the consequent restriction of heavy grazing by dairy cows or sheep until such time as the pastures consolidate;
- (3) The large areas still available for development.

While this district is not so well favoured climatically as the Waikato district, there are certain features of the two districts which are not dissimilar, and there is no doubt that the area has a distinct future as a large dairying district.

A noticeable feature of pumice-land development is the large area that has been planted in trees both by private companies and by the State. The question arises as to whether it would be more useful to extend tree-planting operations than to establish grass pastures on the pumice lands. The Committee is of the opinion that there is ample scope for both projects and that a balanced programme covering both tree-planting and grass establishment should be carried out in the future. The establishment of grass should have preference on those areas which are more suitable and of better quality. The quality of the pumice lands varies, and tree-planting should not be undertaken unless in the first instance the land is not considered suitable for grassland farming.

Whereas grass is established reasonably quickly, tree-growing involves a long-term period before the productive period is reached, and in view of the many factors operating any comparison of the ultimate utility value of the respective projects would be largely speculative.

North Auckland.

The areas visited in the North Auckland district were of two distinct types—

- (1) The coastal sandy country west of Dargaville;
- (2) A typical gum-land block at Mangawai.

In the former case the area comprises a belt of consolidated sand country adjoining the west coast. The Rehutai and Te Maire small farms settlements are situated in this area, and a visit was paid to the latter, and also to Bradley's Block adjoining, which was recently purchased and is being developed for soldier settlement. The work carried out on these blocks to date has proved that this particular type of country will hold good pasture for dairying. The main drawback is the need for shelter and the reticulation of adequate water-supplies to the respective subdivisions. The latter has been carried out on the Rehutai and Te Maire Blocks by community schemes, and there is also a suitable source of supply on Bradley's Block. There appears to be no doubt that the development of areas within this coastal belt is sound and good dairy-farms should result.

The gum land at Mangawai comprises an old kauri-gum reserve which had been extensively dug over for gum and before development commenced contained a large number of big gum holes. In the later stage of development a bulldozer has been used