

to advantage to fill in these holes, and good grass has been established. The subdivision of this block into dairying units is the ultimate objective. The Committee was impressed with the scope offering for development in the North Auckland district and with the large areas of easy contoured land still undeveloped.

Hawke's Bay.

The operations in the Hawke's Bay district are limited to work on three main blocks and two surrendered holdings. The large block, the Kakariki Estate, contains over 19,000 acres, and was purchased in 1931 under the Land for Settlements Act. This block for the most part comprises light pumice country which was in a very deteriorated state when taken over. It responds well to artificial manuring, but the scrub-reversion factor is a big one and adds to maintenance costs. Development has not proceeded sufficiently to enable subdivision of this block, as the more-developed portions are necessary to enable the poorer portions to be adequately stocked to assist further pasture establishment.

The Kahika Estate, of approximately 10,500 acres, comprises an area which was originally held under Native leases. Prior to the expiry of the leases the Native interests were purchased by the Crown, and on expiry of the leases in 1937 development operations were commenced. About one-half of the area consists generally of long steep spurs of a heavy clay formation, and has been farmed by the previous lessees for some sixty years. Although originally well fenced, the fences during the latter period of the lease were allowed to get into serious disrepair. At the time work commenced, about one-third of the area was in good grasses which, however, had been badly controlled during the last few seasons, another third had reverted to scrub and fern, and the balance was beginning to revert. Although a lot of work has been done in the reconditioning of this large block, it would not be advisable to consider placing settlers on the area until development is completed, and, furthermore, in view of the cost of access roading the questions of continuing to run the block indefinitely as a station should be seriously considered.

The Ahuriri Lagoon, of 7,753 acres, was also inspected. This block was originally a shallow tidal area, but the 1931 earthquake brought about an uplift of from 5 ft. to 7 ft. and made possible its reclamation and development for farming purposes.

In 1934 the Crown leased the area from the Napier Harbour Board, with a view to a scheme of reclamation and development being carried out, the ultimate object being the subdivision and settlement of the area by the Small Farms Board when the land reached a sufficiently sweetened and matured state. The Harbour Board assumed liability for the reclamation costs, the Unemployment Board were to find the labour-costs, and the Small Farms Board undertook the cost of farming and development.

The reclamation work entailed a very extensive scheme of banking, draining, roading, and bridging. About 1,500 acres is drained by gravity, and the balance by a system of deeper drains leading to pumping-stations, at which the water is lifted by electric pumps into the main tidal outfall. An extensive water-supply system to supply the whole area has been installed, the source being a number of artesian wells at the southern extremity.

The salt content is, of course, the main difficulty in the profitable utilization of the lagoon area. The desalting drains have proved very effective, and by the autumn of 1936 it was possible to lay down an area of 280 acres in permanent pasture and carry out a certain amount of experimental cropping. Apart from the pastures which have been established, the rapid spread of natural growths has increased the stock-carrying capacity. At the present time there is a total area of 1,370 acres in either permanent or temporary pasture, while there are large areas covered by natural growths suitable for grazing stock; approximately 340 acres are in crop comprising barley, lucerne, mangels, and pumpkins. Good crops of green peas for canning have been grown, and fair results obtained from experimental asparagus crops. Generally speaking, the trials have shown that the soils on the lagoon are as yet rather immature to expect particularly good results, but when fully sweetened and matured the area will be one of high productive value and capable of close subdivision.

During the desalting process a large number of sheep and a limited number of cattle are being run, and the area last year wintered 2,796 ewes, 6,059 dry sheep, and 197 head of cattle. A total of 2,569 lambs were docked.

The work being done on this area will provide a great asset to the Hawke's Bay district, and, situated as it is alongside Napier, will ultimately provide small holdings for a large number of people.

CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT.

It has already been pointed out that the development work was in the main started as a relief-of-unemployment measure. Unemployed men were drafted to the various blocks, and their conditions of employment were fixed by the Unemployment Board. Married men who were in the category of prospective settlers worked a 47-hour week, and were paid according to a scale, varying with the number of dependent children. Where single men were employed on development work the usual "single men's camp" conditions applied.

In 1936 a separate agreement was concluded between the Hon. the Minister of Lands and the New Zealand Workers' Union governing the terms and conditions of employment of men on land-development work. This agreement was further revised in 1939, and applies to all men who are engaged on the development blocks and who are not regarded as occupiers, the latter being men who have been selected to occupy holdings, and are more or less permanent farm hands.

Men who are engaged on the usual development work work a 40-hour week and are paid at an hourly rate. The work they perform is similar to a degree to work performed by Public Works employees, and the conditions under the agreement are very similar to those embodied in the Public Works workers' agreement, and a large amount of work is done on co-operative contract. Overtime is, however, not worked unless the men are called upon to perform essential or seasonal duties outside of and in addition to the