

Paruawai.—This is the old Clay Creek station of 7,724 acres situated south of Martinborough. It was purchased on 25th February. It is anticipated that the property, which is all hill country, will subdivide into six grazing units. A considerable amount of roading is required to permit of subdivision, and until the new road is located by the Public Works Department it is not possible to finalize the scheme of subdivision. The station stock, comprising 6,200 breeding-ewes, 3,800 dry sheep, and 600 cattle, was purchased by the Department, and the station Manager and staff have been retained and the property will be farmed by the Department pending completion of development work, which will take probably about two years.

Ruamahanga is a property of about 2,340 acres situated east of Carterton. It was purchased on 29th March. The bulk of the property is of easy contour and suitable for development as dairying and fat-lamb units, but a very considerable amount of development is required to reach this stage. An ex-serviceman has been appointed as Manager with the right to an undefined section, the property is being stocked, and it will be farmed by the Department pending completion of development which will take two or three years.

COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS, BLENHEIM

There is now a fairly extensive development programme in hand in this district, including some large blocks of country of varying types, ranging from 4,909 acres of high country on Greenhills with its difficult climatic conditions and involving an extensive plan of regrassing and supplementary crops, to very dissimilar types near Kaikoura and Blenheim comprising mixed sheep and dairying, mixed sheep and cropping, fat-lamb raising, the reclamation and development of a rather neglected flat swamp area in Speed's Valley, a full-sized economical orchard, and a small seed-farm near the boundary of the town—a very good cross-section of the general range of farming as practised in the Marlborough Land District.

In the initial stages suitable labour was difficult to obtain, but this drawback has been overcome. Every endeavour has been made to place ex-servicemen in occupation as soon as possible.

The biggest difficulty is, of course, that of getting buildings erected, but even there progress is now being made. Altogether some thirteen areas have been purchased, comprising an area of 14,069 acres, and up to the present twenty-one settlers have been placed, eleven on wages with the promise of a section, and ten on permanent tenure.

One small area of 60 acres which is at present held under lease until next April comprises good agriculture land within easy distance of the centre of the town and which may be suitable for subdivision into 5-acre or 10-acre allotments.

Warwick Farm Settlement (Cunningham's), which was purchased by negotiation, was settled by two men on leasehold basis almost immediately. Charges have now been finalized and settlers granted tenures on Puhī Puhī (Thacker's and Hamilton's) and Sedgemere.

The following is a brief synopsis of the position of each area under control during the year :—

Collier's Seed-farm consists of 25½ acres of first-class flat land situated in Budge Street, Blenheim. It had a good reputation as a small-seed farm, with a full range of plant, glasshouse, and drying-frames, also a few pear and apricot trees. During the year it has continued under the supervision of the local office of the Agriculture Department and no development was needed. The "B" grade trainee working on wages proved to be a first-class man and a great worker. As he was later graded "A" for this class of farming, the property was valued, charges fixed, and the land allotted.

Drapeer's.—This is a compact and handy area of 60 acres in Alabama Road, Blenheim, held under a lease which expires in April, 1947. It is used principally for agricultural and small-seed purposes. It is sure to be in good demand when the lease expires next April, and there is a possibility it may be subdivided into 10-acre blocks, for which purpose it is suitable and for which a demand may be found to exist.