

The lands in the Tolaga Bay district known as Paremata and Mangaheia belong to two groups of owners. In the Mangaheia lands there is a considerable area of flat agricultural land along the banks of the Uawa River. A large part of this is now farmed by the Commissioner, being part of Paroa and Iwinui Stations. Early next year the remaining leases of parts of the Mangaheia Block will expire and a further area of 2,274 acres partially composed of good flat land will revert to and be farmed by the Commissioner.

Paroa Station is composed partly of high, steep country which works in well with the remaining flats on which a considerable amount of agricultural work is carried out, and crops of maize, rye-grass, hay, &c., have been grown extensively. Iwinui Station, adjoining Paroa and composed of the Paremata 3 Block, has been heavily top-dressed, with the result that the carrying-capacity has been increased very considerably. Owing to the difficulty in obtaining teamsters, an agricultural tractor has been used with success in the cultivation of both the Mangaheia and Paremata Blocks.

The Paremata 64 Block, which is known as Titirangi Station, was taken over in February last from the former lessees. Although steep, this is good sheep country, running along the sea-coast from Tolaga Bay Harbour to some miles southwards.

The position regarding station labour has improved considerably over the last twelve months, but developmental and maintenance work have been hampered owing to the shortage of materials, particularly fencing-wire and corrugated iron.

For the past twelve months the rainfall has been abnormally light and during the last six months the whole district suffered from a serious drought. Fires traversed some 3,000 acres to 4,000 acres of East Coast Trust properties, particularly in the Tahora and Mangatu Blocks, and although no loss of stock resulted, very considerable damage was done to fencing. Almost all these areas have been resown, and owing to the good autumn rains the strikes of grass have been phenomenal.

On the Mangatu Block during the last eighteen months almost 1,000 acres of manuka country has been broken up with a tractor and giant disks, and land which was producing practically nothing is now in swedes and 500 acres to 600 acres sown down in English grass. This will result in a very large increase in the carrying capacity. The work done by the tractors on steep country covered with heavy manuka has been exceptionally good and some splendid strikes of swedes have been obtained.

The Commissioner is now importing one or two large bulldozers fitted with logging winches. These will be used for timber-milling and also for roadmaking in the back of the Mangatu areas, where there are large supplies of dead totara suitable for posts. Owing to the difficulty in obtaining men to work pack teams it is the intention to haul the totara logs to a point where they can be split into posts and loaded directly on to a lorry and distributed to the various stations.

The East Coast Trust land—known as Onenui Station—situated at the extreme end of the Mahia Peninsula has until this year relied entirely on boat transport. This entailed the use of surf-boats, and all stores and materials necessary for the running of the station were brought in by this means. The wool was also shipped out in the same manner. For two years during the war no boat was available and two wool clips had to be held on the station. This year the Commissioner has had a road-line surveyed along the coast over the flat rocks and has succeeded in making a low-tide road by filling in crevices with bags loosely filled with sand and cement. The result is that road transport is now possible at low tide over this route and the wool clip has been carted out for the first time by motor-lorry.