

Whangapoua (Locality: Coromandel). Area, 21,055 acres. Possession date, 1st February, 1946. Subdivision not finally planned. Of the total area, some 2,000 acres of flat to undulating country will be developed by this Department and ultimately subdivided into dairy-farms, while the balance will be taken over by the State Forest Service. To date the main work has been confined to renovating existing buildings, repairing fences, and cleaning drains. A start has also been made with clearing portions of undeveloped country, the ploughing and cultivation of run-out grass areas for winter crops, and the resowing of approximately 296 acres with grass-seed. Considerable further development work is necessary before settlement can take place.

Wharere Block (Locality: Bay of Plenty). Area, 4,941 acres. Possession date, 11th August, 1933. Subdivision not finally planned. Shortage of labour and machinery has affected the development programme on this block. The main drainage outlets are badly silted up and require reconditioning immediately, and although an excavator has been operating during the year it has been held up for long periods for overhaul. Some plant is to be obtained on loan, but even with two machines it will be some years before the accumulated maintenance work can be overtaken. Much of the country has subsided to such a level that flood-pumping will have to be resorted to to keep it clear of water in the winter-time. The suction bay and building for one of these flood pumping-stations was installed during the year near the junction of Waerenga Road and the Wharere Canal and two 5,500 gallons per minute pumps are on order. The men employed on this area have also been employed on the Waihi drainage works. Their work has been almost entirely confined to maintenance of drains, fences, pastures, and care of stock. During the year two sections aggregating 168 acres were allotted on fixed charges to two civilian occupiers who had been given promises of leases.

Billings (Part Wharere Block).—No further development has been possible, and owing to shortage of feed in the winter it was necessary to graze a rough area of Hereford Park adjoining. The stock has come through satisfactorily, but fat-lamb returns are lighter owing to a bad season and insufficient top-dressing.

Jensens (Part Wharere Block).—This property suffered severely from last season's drought, necessitating reduction of stock during the year. Lucerne has been shown on 15 acres, and the developed areas has been well controlled.

Whenuanui (Locality: Ruawai). Area, 136 acres. Possession date, 30th August, 1946. Subdivision not yet finalized. When acquired this holding was in a very badly poached condition and suffering from arrears of maintenance, particularly drains. The result is that it will take time to get pastures back to normal. The total area is too small for two economic units even with a run-off, but negotiations are in progress for an additional 40 acres. At present this area is farmed in conjunction with Awaroa Block, where the stock require periodical spelling off the fescue pastures.

Whitesides (Locality: Otakiri).—Area, 97 acres. Possession date, 1st June, 1945. Subdivision, single unit. An ex-serviceman has been milking on wages during the season and it is expected that charges will be fixed from 1st July next. The development work, erection of buildings, fencing, and renovation of pastures has been practically completed.

SUPERINTENDENT OF LAND DEVELOPMENT, TE KUITI

As at 31st March, 1946, thirty-nine blocks, comprising 65,860 acres, were under the control of this office. During the past year seven properties, of 4,682 acres, were purchased, and 8,708 acres were alienated by settlement or reservation, leaving 61,384 acres (thirty-six blocks) still under development.

During the year thirty-four ex-servicemen have been established on dairy-farms (3,985 acres) and ten ex-servicemen on sheep-farms (3,817 acres). These men were all selected by ballot, six having been employed on wages pending the fixing of charges on their sections. In addition, six small-farm civilian settlers were placed on dairy-farms aggregating 604 acres. Settlement was completed on seven blocks during the year—namely, Burns', Kakepuku, Konui, Mangaotaki, Tarata, Te Kowhai, and Whatawhata.