

It was therefore decided at the end of 1930 to purchase from the Dansey family the Waipapa-Whatapo Block, 90 acres 3 roods 37 perches, at £2,500. The Forestry Service had appraised the bush on the 25th of June, 1930, and valued the totara alone at £2,474; and had stated that there was in addition a heavy stand of matai and rimu, matai being the dominant species. The officers of the Native Department estimated that over one hundred thousand totara posts (with strainers, blocks, and stays and battens in addition) could be obtained, and more than twice that quantity of matai posts. Treasury was assured that this method of obtaining supplies of posts was more economical than purchasing posts as required. It has certainly secured a reduction in the price of fencing-posts throughout the Rotorua district, given much-needed employment to Maoris, and assured a certain and constant supply.

The Waipapa Bush as a scheme was attached in the first place to Horohoro, but was afterwards separated at the request of Treasury. The expenditure to the 31st March 1931, was £2,628, of which the purchase of the land accounted for £2,500. Camp equipment and track-making were responsible for £128. During the 1931-32 financial year forty-one men were employed off and on in the bush. The expenditure to the end of that financial year amounted to £4,778, including the cost of the land, £2,506; the purchase of a motor-truck £227; road and track making, £423; and camp accommodation and equipment, £180.

The output from the bush to the 31st March, 1932, was as follows:—

—					Posts.	Strainers.	Battens.	Blocks.	Stays.
To schemes	..	..	..	..	29,892	526	16,040	558	86
To camp	..	..	..	..	295	6	500	30	..
On hand	..	..	..	..	14,673	160	22,031	1,800	97
Miscellaneous	..	..	..	..	..	56	170	183	..
					44,860	748	38,741	2,571	183
Missing	..	..	..	..	167	..	..	..	33
					44,693	748	38,741	2,571	150

(e) BRENT'S FARM.

As a precautionary measure, in view of the possibility of stock troubles arising on Horohoro and adjoining schemes, it was deemed advisable to acquire an area of healthy land near Rotorua, to which stock affected with bush sickness might be removed. It was also necessary to have quarters in a convenient and central position for a reliable stockman. On the 14th October, 1931, the manager of Brent's Ltd. offered the land known as Brent's Farm, a Native leasehold comprising 335 acres 1 rood 36 perches, of which nearly 29 acres were subleased. The Farm Supervisor reported favourably on the property. It was warm, undulating land, facing north, with little waste on it and subdivided into small paddocks. He valued the improvements at £3,112. An offer of £9 an acre was approved by Cabinet, or £2,760, and the sale was completed at that price in March, 1932. At the realization sale of stock and equipment sundry purchases were made by the Department, which added £188 to the expenditure for the year.

Brent's Farm is on the healthy side of Rotorua. The land is covered with Rotomahana mud, and will provide excellent change paddocks for young stock, especially dairy weaner heifers.

(f) MOUREA.

This scheme embraces a number of leasehold and freehold properties purchased from Messrs. G. N. Vaughan and S. A. Pethybridge. The negotiations in respect of these were commenced in the early part of 1931 by offers from or on behalf of the lessees or owners. The purchase of Vaughan's properties was completed at the end of March, 1931; and that of Pethybridge's at the end of July, 1931. The total area purchased was 2,671 acres, consisting of 755 acres of European freehold, all but 232 acres of which was grassed and enclosed, and 1,916 acres of Native leaseholds, of which about 500 acres were in rough pasture. The purchase price was £5,777. Small pieces of Native freehold land situated at Tikitere and Ruamata were added before the end of the financial year 1931-32, amounting to 348 acres, which brought the total area under this scheme to 3,019 acres.

The lands comprised in this scheme are distributed as follows: 1,100 acres on the north side of the Ohau Channel and 1,919 acres on the south side of that channel.

Of the latter 180 acres are situated on the west side of the Rotorua-Taheke Road, almost immediately south of the channel, the area being known locally as Okahu; 133 acres lie south-east of the Tikitere springs; and the balance, 1,606 acres, are on the north side of the Rotorua - Te Teko - Opotiki Highway and between such highway and Lake Rotoiti.

The lands north of the Ohau Channel are bounded on the north and north-east by the lands comprised in the Taheke Development Scheme, a scheme financed by the Waiariki Maori Land Board. They are for the most part hilly and fern-clad, but fertile and reasonably healthy for stock. Small areas are suitable for dairying without much preparation, but a larger area can be rendered suitable with internal roading and a comprehensive system of water-supply. In the meantime these lands are being broken into pasture for grazing sheep and cattle.

The development of these lands was undertaken early in the 1931-32 financial year, the work being allotted to unemployed Maoris of Mourea and Taheke. The fern was burnt off, the land sown in grass and top-dressed, fenced in, and stocked with wethers and bullocks. The fencing completed on this part of the Mourea scheme consisted of 807 chains of new fences and 170 chains of repairs. The area grassed was 200 acres and the total area enclosed 750 acres in four subdivisions.