

Although Cabinet approved the expenditure of £1,000 on land-development in the Manawatu district in 1930–31, no expenditure was incurred until the following year. Matakarapa Block of 273 acres was brought under the Manawatu Development Scheme on the 1st August, 1931.

Work was commenced in the Manawatu district on the Matakarapa Block, the expenditure to the 31st March, 1932, being £185, mostly for scrub-cutting and draining. A detailed report on the position of the development of this block is deferred, and will cover the facts to the end of the current financial year.

The scope of Mr. Flowers' supervision was extended to Manawatu, and he was instructed to examine the position of applications that had been received from Natives in various parts of the district and to make recommendations for the 1932–33 estimates.

“G.” SOUTH ISLAND MAORI LAND DISTRICT.

The position in the South Island in respect of the development of lands owned or occupied by the Maori population is very different from that in the North Island. The Maori communities are scattered and isolated from one another. Surrounded by European settlement for several generations the culture of the people has undergone greater change than that of the North Island tribes, and it is a matter for serious consideration whether a scheme based upon North Island conditions and experience is adapted to the conditions in the South Island. The Native Minister, accompanied by the late Mr. Tuiti Makitarana, then member for the Southern Maori District, visited various settlements in the South Island during March, 1930, as the result of which three groups of blocks were brought under the provisions of section 23 of the Act of 1929, as follows:—

					A.	R.	P.
Wairau Native Reserve, Blenheim	..	..	..	..	839	3	14
Oraka and other blocks, Colac Bay	..	..	..	..	1,143	0	3
Kawhakaputaputa Blocks, Colac Bay	..	..	..	..	1,266	2	35
Total	..	..	..	..	3,249	2	12

Proposals in respect of Mangamaunu, near Kaikoura, and of portions of the Kaiapoi Native Reserve, and Arowhenua were not proceeded with.

The headquarters of the South Island Maori Land Board, to which in the ordinary course the administration of development schemes in the South Island was delegated, are in Wellington. The matter of the supervision of these schemes, especially of those so far south as Colac Bay, was more serious than in the case of North Island schemes. Eventually Mr. Timpany, of Woodlands, near Invercargill, was appointed to the control of the Oraka and Kawhakaputaputa Schemes, which were put into operation on the 19th July, 1930.

(a) WAIRAU.

The lands comprising this scheme were notified on the 28th March and 11th May, 1931, and consisted of subdivisions of Wairau, Block XII, Wairau Commonage C and B and other blocks, the total area being 839 acres 3 roods 14 perches.

The proposed development took the form of banking and ditching to protect the reserve from flood-water from creeks that flowed into the Pukaka drain on the north-east of it. It was urged that if water could be kept off the reserve or drained off its productivity, which was remarkable before river-diversion and drainage schemes in the Wairau Basin affected the land, being on the lowest level, would be restored and many profitable farms would be established thereon. It was represented to the Native Minister when he met those interested at Picton and at the reserve that the banking could be completed for £800.

The Commissioner of Crown Lands at Blenheim and the Wairau River Board were consulted in regard to the banking and drainage scheme. Unemployment-relief schemes were then operating all over the Dominion, and it was suggested that the work proposed in connection with the Wairau Reserve might be carried out by unemployed Maoris. An investigation showed that not a great number of Maoris was available, and these did not possess sufficient horses and equipment to carry out the work, which to be done satisfactorily or at all should take full advantage of the summer months.

It was then arranged that the Wairau River Board should prepare and call for tenders for the work on the understanding that unemployed Maoris should be used as far as possible. The aggregate price of the lowest tenders, £2,270, was above what the Department was prepared to expend on this work, and in respect of unemployment subsidy the Maori unemployment grant was available for the employment of Maoris only. Many of the tenders, which on the score of price, should have been declared successful, were from Europeans. In the circumstances, and in default of special arrangements with the Unemployment Board enabling the Maori unemployment grant to be used for other than unemployed Maoris, the matter was not proceeded with further.

It is probable that misunderstandings had arisen between those on the spot and the Department. The latter was cautious in regard to committing itself to a heavy expenditure on a work of an unusual character of which it had no experience in any other district.

The only expenditure incurred to the 31st March, 1932, was for surveys and preparation of data for the banking and ditching contracts, amounting to £359.