

The operations during the year under review were confined principally to breaking in new raupo country, cultivating, ditching, and cropping as follows: 235 acres are under plough or in pea stubble; 28 chains of new fence were completed on the west of the Roberts drain, and the whole of the stop-banks are now adequately protected against stock; 400 chains of new ditches were excavated and 200 chains of old ditches were cleaned; 37 chains of banking were completed; 75 acres of rushes and 19 acres of flax were grubbed; 13 acres cleared of willows and raupo; 90 acres partly stumped after ploughing; and lastly, one new flood-pump was erected and housed, and a flood-gate renewed. Unemployed Natives have been engaged on this scheme to a large extent.

Unfortunately, weather conditions seriously interfered with the cropping programme and, owing to late ploughing and sowing due to unprecedented wet weather, the estimated crop, which realized £800, did not fulfil the expectations for the season. Given reasonable climatic conditions this coming season, the prospects are bright, and the realization of the crop should go far towards liquidating the total indebtedness of a large undertaking.

Kaiwhare.

This is a recent venture commenced during the year and aims at the development of approximately 500 acres of easy hill country covered with bush and scrub, part of which has been burnt standing. The block is situated about ten miles from Kaikoura and about eighty miles from Blenheim. The supervision is causing some anxiety on account of the inaccessibility of the scheme.

The programme to the 31st March, on which unemployed labour was utilized, comprised: 170 chains of fence-line cleared; two miles of track prepared for packing of fencing material; 11 chains of drains cleaned and deepened; 49 chains of new subdivisional fence erected; and 10 acres of dead standing manuka scrub cleaned.

Oraka and Kawhakaputaputa.

Comprising two areas near Colac Bay of about 2,500 acres within easy reach of the Tuatapere-Riverton railway, and accessible by good roads, this land was nearly all in heavy bush when development was commenced at the end of 1930. Most of the bush has been felled, and the cultivated land now supports thirty-six adults and fifty-one minor dependants. Some sections are still unoccupied and it is doubtful whether they can be economically developed at the present time.

All the land comprised in this scheme has now been brought within the provisions of Part XVI of the Native Land Act, 1931, and the matter of the issue of leases to the units is receiving attention. The principal activities during the year under review have been the maintenance of fences, together with five miles of new fencing; 60 acres of scrub-cutting and logging-up; 10 chains of draining; and 75 acres of ploughing. One new house and two cow-byres have been erected, and several cow-byres have been renovated.

The 300 ewes purchased last year for ragwort control have proved a profitable investment, and the sale of the lambs has added materially to the returns to the units. Live-stock returns at 31st March are as follows: 348 cows, 74 heifers, 87 calves, 18 bulls, 15 steers, 21 horses, and 424 sheep. The expenditure for the year, exclusive of unemployment contracts, was £1,300. Cash receipts for the year amounted to £880, principally from milk and cream cheques and the sale of stock. The milk yield is not yet up to expectations, due to the fact that the herds still require a considerable amount of systematic culling. The butterfat returns for the year were 34,080 lb. of first grade and 2,483 lb. of second grade.

In order to assist and keep units on their holdings, unemployment contracts amounting to £500 were arranged, and it is gratifying to observe that this scheme is approaching the stage where most of the units should, with little further expenditure, be self supporting.
