

The improvements to date have all been carried out by the Maoris who have interests in the block, and it is estimated that in order to effectively keep the second growth and noxious weeds in control, these Natives may be advantageously employed during several successive winters. The fencing is in good order, while the reserve of bush will ensure a supply of posts for some years. The pasture is steadily improving with the disappearance of the scrub, and a heavy complement of cattle is being successfully carried. The Romney flock of sheep is attaining a higher standard, resulting in an improved clip of about 170 bales annually. The tally of sheep now wintering on this station totals 7,870, of which number 4,700 are breeding-ewes. A herd of Polled Angus cattle has been established, numbering 1,100 head and including 500 breeding-cows. A new manager's dwelling has been recently erected, and will be welcomed, as the former quarters had outlived their usefulness. Other buildings and improvements include a six-stand wool-shed, shearing quarters, shepherd's quarters, dip, and sheep and cattle yards.

The net receipts for the year under review were as follows: wool-clip of 173 bales realized £2,210; live-stock sales amounted to £3,888. A table of trading results is appended hereunder.

Year.			Profit.	Loss.
			£	£
1929-30	..	..	1,383	..
1930-31	..	..	..	5,550
1931-32	..	..	..	4,316
1932-33	..	..	..	79
1933-34	..	..	4,559	..
1934-35	..	..	1,849	..
1935-36	..	..	3,937	..
			11,728	9,945

The losses, it will be noted, occur in the three years which are recognized as denoting the most stringent period of the recent economic depression. A trading profit of £1,783 has thus been made since the station was taken over by the Board.

Tihiotonga Station.

In August, 1928, the Waiariki District Maori Land Board acquired this property under the provisions of the Native Land Act (now section 106, 1931) from the European owners on behalf of the Ngati-Whakaue (a sub-tribe of the Arawas) for the reason that this hapu was practically landless. The station when purchased comprised 913 acres freehold, and 1,702 acres of Native and Crown leaseholds, and is situated about three miles from Rotorua Township. As the area was subject to cattle sickness, "change" properties—also in the vicinity of Rotorua—were acquired by the Board, and the station now consists of the following blocks:—

Tihiotonga—								Acres.
Native leasehold	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1,660
Crown leasehold	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	42
Freehold	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	913
Subsequent purchases of Wharenui, Puketawhero, and Hill's Blocks—								
Native leasehold	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	2,739
Freehold	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	11
								5,365

Farming operations were continued by the Waiariki Board until 31st March, 1934, but through lack of funds, and understocking, the pastures deteriorated, and, as a temporary measure, the properties were taken over and stocked by the Department. Fences and pastures have been much improved and the station is now in good order. The Maori Land Board resumed control of the area as from the 1st April, 1936, and will manage the farm on its own account—subject to a comparatively small mortgage to the Department. The Board has already established two dairying units on the property, and it is intended to run the balance of the area as a sheep and cattle station meantime, with the ultimate objective of subdivision into smaller holdings for the settlement of Natives.

Recent reports on the land state that in the Tihiotonga Block there are approximately 1,850 acres of easy-lying country facing north, which, when wholly grassed and the pasture brought up to the right standard, should be capable of supporting eighteen settlers. At present there are approximately 600 acres in good pasture, 500 acres in fair pasture, and the balance in poor grass and fern.

The major portion of the Puketawhero Block is steep and unsuitable for subdivision. There are 215 acres in pasture of inferior grasses, and 300 acres have been cleared and will be burnt in preparation for sowing. This block has been used as a "change" paddock for any sick stock on the Tihiotonga Block.

Hill's Block is stated to be healthy country, suitable for grazing sheep and cattle and, as the major portion is hilly, closer settlement will not be attempted. It is well subdivided into paddocks, and a water-supply has been installed.

The Wharenui Block is worked in conjunction with the two preceeding blocks and, on account of being broken by deep watercourses, is not suitable for subdivision. It is elevated country ranging from 1,000 ft. to 1,600 ft. above sea-level, and is exposed but is good sheep land.

The programme for the year under review provided for the top-dressing of 1,000 acres of pastures, sundry cropping, and for unemployment contracts on clearings, ploughing, road work, water-supply, and fencing. The dairying units milked two herds comprising some 180 cows.