

It is proposed during the coming year to commence the development of an area at Tunaek in the vicinity of Whatawhata, at Uruwha near Waihi, and other areas are under consideration, notably extensive blocks in the Raglan County, which would appear to offer scope for development. Inquiries have been made into other lands in the Hauraki area, but here lack of unanimity among individual holders of small areas is hindering developmental progress. Experience gained during the year shows the necessity for an exhaustive stock-taking of the lands available in the district, and the compilation of title data to supplement the records of the Native Land Court.

Hangatiki Base Farm.

Situated within one mile of the Hangatiki Railway-station and midway between the townships of Te Kuiti and Otorohanga, this base farm comprises a total area of 556 acres, of which 500 acres are estimated as suitable for development. The property was taken over in January, 1937, from the Waikato-Maniapoto District Maori Land Board, which was then mortgagee in possession. The sum of £3,547 is due to the Board as a liability free of interest charges.

The land occupies a position that makes it admirably suited for the purpose of a base farm, being in close proximity by good roads to a number of areas already under development and others which are now under consideration.

Geographically, Hangatiki is situated near the confluence of several tributaries of the Waipa River and, as it was in olden days, it is at the cross-roads of inland and coastal highways.

Historically it can claim an interesting background of Maori history and traditions. Near here is Paratiu, the fortified pa of the Ngati-Maniapoto tribe, where the tribe had congregated with the intention of fighting out the deciding battle of the Waikato War. Rewi Maniapoto and his gallant band, however, chose to fight on their own particular ancestral soil at Orakau, and the main body of the tribe waited in vain for Rewi and the British forces. Paratiu remains to-day—still in a good state of preservation—as mute evidence of the Maniapoto military and strategical genius in the selection of their fortified pas. Hangatiki is also famous as the home of Maniapoto, the eponymous ancestor of the Ngati-Maniapoto tribe. Here also he died.

At the time the base farm was taken over from the Board only 75 acres of pastures were worth top-dressing; 90 acres were in poor pastures which required ploughing and resowing; the drains in 45 acres of swamp were choked and required cleaning; fences, yards, and bridges were in poor repair; and gorse had been allowed to grow unchecked. When the Department took possession the services of a young half-caste Maori were obtained as working foreman, and he has proved very satisfactory, and in the short period that he has been employed good work has been carried out in repairing the fences and bridges and grubbing out gorse.

As at 31st March, 1937, the property was carrying 240 ewes, which is its limit at the present time. The sheep will not return a profit until next season as they were only purchased in February, 1937. The carrying-capacity is $2\frac{1}{2}$ sheep to the acre.

Harataunga.

As a result of representations that the Department assist three Native farmers at Kennedy Bay, Coromandel, this new scheme was inaugurated. These men were depending on employment relief to carry on their farms, but they were considerably hampered for want of stock and dairy utensils. The Chief Supervisor reported very favourably on these settlers, and after full information had been collected the Board of Native Affairs approved of an area of 376 acres being declared subject to the development legislation and the nomination of three units. The three Natives thus assisted have justified the action of the Department, and it is hoped to establish additional units during the coming year. Supervision is conducted from Paeroa, where further projected development schemes in the Hauraki Plains and Coromandel Peninsula are being considered. The matter of obtaining consents of the majority of owners is a difficult one, since many of the owners of the blocks live at Tikitiki, Te Araroa, and other places north of Gisborne. The Harataunga people are members of the Ngati-Porou tribe of the East Coast. The story of how and why the Harataunga block was gifted by a Ngatimaru chief, and how they came to settle there, is a long one, and is an interesting chapter in the history of the Ngati-Porou tribe as coastal traders. With the opening-up of inland means of transport the Harataunga people became an isolated community (broken for a brief and hectic period during the gold rush of the "nineties"), and representatives of various families, in some cases whole families, returned to their ancestral homes on the East Coast.

Only two of the settlers were milking cows during the past year, and they commenced in November, 1936. The activities in general farm work comprised $23\frac{1}{2}$ acres of bushfelling and clearing, the splitting of 200 posts, and the erection of 1 new cottage, 2 cow-sheds, and repairs to 1 cottage.

The number of dependants—wives and children—is thirteen. The area cultivated to date is 110 acres, while, in all, a further 230 acres are estimated as suitable for ultimate development.

Kaihau.

Locally known as "Tahuna," this scheme is situated about two miles from Waiuku Township in the Franklin County, and comprises five separate holdings, totalling 376 acres. The five occupiers are on wages based on one-third of their cream cheques, and they retain the total proceeds from the pigs. The question of tenure has been under consideration during the past year, and valuations have now been made with a view to establishing the occupiers as assisted farmers.