

Pio Pio.

Lying in the valley of the Mokau, one of the most important waterways to the west coast in the early history of the district, this scheme of 1,266 acres was gazetted in August and September, 1936. The quality of the soil is excellent, being good river flats. In years gone by the tide of tribal warfare between the Ngati-Maniapoto and various Wanganui and Taranaki tribes ebbed and flowed in an unceasing manner up and down the Mokau as the people of the two canoe areas—Aotea and Tainui—fought desperately for this much coveted and fertile territory.

The scheme at 31st March, 1937, consisted of only four units, but the areas will later be divided into suitable farms. The personal element in all cases is excellent. In common with other areas in the King-country, ragwort is prevalent, and sheep will be run until the control of this menace is assured.

The work carried out by unemployed men on the farm sections consisted of 192 acres of bush-felling and clearing, 58 acres of ploughing and cultivating, and the erection of 1 whare. Live-stock on the properties as at 31st March comprised 35 cows, 10 other dairy stock, 50 run cattle, and 590 ewes.

Pirongia.

This scheme comprises a number of blocks at the foothills of Pirongia Mountain and along the banks of the Waipa River and some of its tributaries. The Waipa River in the days of water conveyance was a busy thoroughfare. There were some populous villages along its banks, and wheat-growing was carried out on an extensive scale, but after the wars between Cameron's forces and the Maoris the lands were allowed to revert in many instances to their native state, with the addition, in more recent years, of introduced pests, such as ragwort, gorse, and blackberry.

With the advent of the railway, the Maori population, with the exception of a few families, moved to Otorohanga and to other places nearer the line.

The scheme was commenced in July, 1936, and as at 31st March, 1937, consisted of eight farms, the areas proclaimed embracing approximately 1,336 acres. It comprises easy rolling, ploughable, light country with a particularly fertile soil that responds very well to superphosphate. The settlers have all taken a keen interest in their farms; they are good workers who will doubtless prove successful and who are showing a good example to others in the manner in which they are improving their lands. One farmer has approximately 100 acres of first class river flats, but, unfortunately, it is infested with heavy gorse. It is intended to grub this area, plough deep, and sow it in grass on the first ploughing. During the coming year it is proposed to erect five cottages for the units as well as two cow-sheds.

Work carried out during the year by fifteen unemployed men and eight units with fifty-five dependants consisted of 186 acres of bushfelling and clearing, 30 chains of new fences, 53 chains of new drains, 122 acres of ploughing and cultivating, 41 acres of grassing, and 148 acres of top-dressing.

The receipts for the nine months were: Cream, £85; wool, £45; and sheep sales, £144. The live-stock tally at 31st March was 73 cows, 17 other dairy stock, 113 sheep, 20 horses, 3 bulls, and 24 pigs.

A further area of 371 acres at Kopua acquired by the Native Trustee has been recommended for development under the Native land legislation. The work of bringing this block in will provide work for the unemployed Maoris in the district.

Waahi.

Four farms occupied by members of the Mahuta family are included in this scheme. There are three units at Waahi, Huntly, and one at Rotowaro, and they are all very satisfactory farmers. Although small in area, this scheme is the spear-point of development operations in the Waikato in that one of the units, Koroki Mahuta, is the "Maori King," and the influence exerted by him and the members of his family is reflected throughout and beyond the district. Splendid improvement was made in the pastures during the year, and the units all take a great interest in their farms.

On a total area of 618 acres development has been undertaken on 574 acres. The dependants on the scheme comprise four units, seven additional labourers, and sixteen others, a total of twenty-seven persons.

The number of cows in milk at the flush of the season was 131, while the total butterfat production was 22,457 lb., which realized £1,194.

Waikato.

Classified as a "blanket" scheme, this area embraces seven scattered holdings located at Gordonton, Huntly, Tauhei, and Parawera. The total gazetted area is 770 acres, of which 344 acres are under development, while it is intended to ultimately bring in a further 350 acres. The total dependants on the scheme number forty. The three settlers at Gordonton are sadly handicapped through having only a poor water-supply, which has to be pumped, and, moreover, it does not seem possible to guarantee a successful supply. A new house was built for the one unit at Huntly—a Native woman, who is probably the best settler under the Department's schemes in the whole of the Waikato district; twelve acres of new grass were brought in by the settler at Tauhei. The two new units at Parawera have proved to be good workers and a credit to the Department. Ragwort will be controlled on this latter area during the coming year by stocking with sheep, and, ultimately, these two men should make a success of their holdings.