

WAIARIKI MAORI LAND DISTRICT.

The Waiariki district extends around the Bay of Plenty from Tauranga to Cape Runaway, a distance of 150 miles, and includes the counties of Rotorua, Whakatane, Opotiki, and the northern half of Taupo, the greater part of Tauranga, and a portion of Matamata County.

The headquarters of this district is the Township of Rotorua.

The tribal divisions within the Waiariki territory are as follows: Tauranga district, the Ngai-te-rangi people; Te Puke to Matata, Maketu to Taupo, and Matata to Murupara, the Arawa, Ngati-Manawa, and Ngati-Tuwharetoa tribes; Matata to Opape and hinterland, the lands of the Ngati-Awa, Tuhoe (Urewera), and Whakatohea tribes; Torere, the Ngaitai tribe; and from the north of Torere to Cape Runaway, where the Whanau-a-Apanui landowners reside.

It was natural that the development and settlement of New Zealand should have had its first impulses in the lands abutting on the sea-coast or adjacent to the principal sea-ports of the Islands. The Maori wars between 1860 and 1870 retarded settlement in the Waikato district, and this in turn had its effect upon settlement of the lands which lay beyond, or which, geographically, were so situated that their economic approach was through, that area. This isolation has proved to be a blessing to the Natives of the Rotorua district as it did not subject the Maori landowners to the temptation of disposing of their territory to the land-hungry pakeha to anything like the same extent as operated in the case of the nearer and perhaps better lands of the North Island. The beneficial effects on the Rotorua Maoris of this isolation are to be seen to-day by any one who cares to visit the many thriving Native holdings which have been developed under the Government's Native land development policy inaugurated under the legislation passed for that purpose in 1929. However, it was not this isolation alone which saved much of the Maori estate from alienation to European purchasers. Other factors of equal or even greater importance operated to save the land for the Maori.

In its beginnings it was the thermal activity which was to be found in and around Rotorua which was the district's principal attraction. These thermal activities possessed potentialities for the development of a Tourist and Health resort; a world's playground in fact. The land was not prized or sought after for its farming and agricultural value; the soil consisted of pumice deposits of varying degrees of fineness, and farmers and settlers were not favourably disposed towards that class of country. The result, therefore, was that when the Government's policy of Native land development and settlement of Maoris came into existence in 1930, the Rotorua district provided a more extensive field for the application of the policy than most other districts both by reason of the extent of its Maori owned land and the density of its Maori population. There were many who doubted that the land could be developed and settled by Natives with any likelihood of permanent economic success. The results, however, prove conclusively that not only the Maori settlers themselves, but the district as a whole, can be assured of a rich and stable return from the farming of these lands.

The Maori settler of the Rotorua district has helped to create a community value greater than the cost of the development of his land. But his work is not finished, for he has yet to continue to cultivate and improve his farm in order to maintain it at its present standard of production and to endeavour by the utilization of scientific knowledge to increase its productivity still further. Thus will he rise to full citizenship, able and willing to meet his full responsibilities in that estate side by side with every other member of the community.

Climatic conditions are fairly uniform throughout, though considerably milder winters are experienced on the coastal lands. The district has a generous rainfall, fairly well distributed throughout the year. Inland the summer temperatures are high, winter temperatures low, and ground frosts are fairly common between April and November. Owing to the low temperatures, pasture growth in the immediate vicinity of Rotorua, Ruatahuna, and Tokaanu is backward till middle October, but on the Maketu, Tauranga, and other coastal areas the mildness of the winters ensures a much earlier growth in the pastures. In common with other parts of New Zealand, this summer has been exceptionally wet and the pastures have shown luxuriant growth, which has necessitated heavier stock purchases than originally contemplated.

In the immediate vicinity of Rotorua there are 12,500 acres, comprising Horohoro, Peka, Parekarangi, and Tuhourangi, under development, of which 7,000 acres are in grass. Extending towards the coast within a distance of sixteen miles of Rotorua in the area comprising Tihiotonga, Brents, Tikitere, Okere, Taheke, and Rotoiti, there are 28,547 acres under development and 10,178 acres in grass. From this area of pasture land, 17,178 acres in extent, the following sales of fat and store stock have been made for the twelve months ending 31st March, 1937: 7,693 lambs, 1,422 ewes, 6,378 wethers, and 584 bullocks (booked for sale early in April).

Going further afield to embrace Maketu, Tauranga, Ruatahuna, and Tokaanu, the total shearing figures are 29,948 sheep for a wool-clip of 638 bales. Employment has been given to at least five hundred