

Opape Base Farm.

The property known as Opape base farm comprises a portion of the Opape block; situated eight miles from Opotiki on the Coast road to Cape Runaway. The property is held under a lease expiring on the 30th June, 1962, the leasehold interest having been acquired by the Department in July, 1931.

The farm, which was established as a base for the breeding and supplying of dairy stock to the Native settlers in the Bay of Plenty district, contains a total area of 1,072 acres, of which approximately 800 acres are suitable for development.

The area in permanent pasture is 344 acres, in swamp and rough feed 80 acres, and in lucerne 5 acres. Conditions prevailing during the period under review have been very satisfactory for pastures, and there has been an abundance of feed throughout the season. The area top-dressed with slag has shown excellent results. Good crops of hay and ensilage have been saved, and these will provide ample feed for the coming winter. The area sown down last year has taken extremely well, as has also a further area of 105 acres sown down this autumn.

All live-stock is in good condition and little trouble has been experienced during the year. Stock on the property at the end of the period comprise 4 bulls, 128 cows, 62 heifers, 27 heifer calves, 3 horses, 247 ewes, and a number of pigs. The sheep have done well, 120 fat lambs, averaging 39.3 lb., being sold. This year the number of ewes was increased to 250.

The total butterfat supply for the period under review was 20,327 lb., returning £1,148. The average per cow was 230 lb. The grading of butterfat produced on the property this year has been slightly lower than usual. This may be attributed to the fact that, during the flush of the season, the Manager was absent by reason of indisposition.

During the year general farm-work has been carried out, fences repaired, drains cleaned, and a further area of 105 acres sown in pasture; 176 chains of new fencing were undertaken; 10 chains of fence repairs; and 120 chains of draining; while 100 acres were cleared. The major portion of this work has been carried out with the assistance of Employment Promotion Funds.

Sales during the period under review were as follows: Cattle, £102; sheep, £187; pigs, £4; wool (1,868 lb.), £106: total, £399.

Orete.

The Orete scheme is located on the coast of the Bay of Plenty, and comprises 4,774 acres, of which it is proposed to develop 3,600 acres. There are now twenty-five settlers established, and of these, twenty-three are milking and supplying a dairy factory. The number of persons dependent upon the settlers is 125, being 27 adults and 98 minors.

The area in good permanent pasture is 1,773 acres, in temporary pasture and rough feed 280 acres, and in crops 54 acres. The area sown down during the year is 153 acres. An early mild spring aided growth, and this was well maintained throughout the year, there being an abundance of feed. The weather conditions at harvesting time, however, were adverse, and consequently the settlers were unable to save all the available hay, but sufficient hay and ensilage have been saved to provide for winter requirements.

Live-stock on the property as at the 31st March, 1937, comprised 25 bulls, 776 cows, 130 heifers (two to three year), 155 heifer calves, 39 working horses, 22 working bullocks, 554 breeding ewes, 8 rams, 48 two-toothed ewes, and 324 mixed-sex hoggets. All stock is in good condition.

The grading of cream supplied has been satisfactory, having regard to the difficulties frequently encountered during the year in transporting the cream to the factory. Throughout the year flooding of the rivers and streams to be crossed *en route* to Te Kaha has often caused several days' delay in the collection of cream. Particularly was this so during the end of January and in early February, when heavy flooding and slips on the roads resulted in complete cessation of all traffic for from ten to fourteen days. The grading generally reflects credit upon the settlers for the standard of cleanliness observed, and this has been aided by the installation of an efficient and adequate water-supply system. The following is a table showing butterfat supplied for the season under review with a comparative return for the previous season:—

Year.			Total Butterfat supplied.	Total Value.	Number of Cows.	Average per Cow.	
			lb.	£		lb.	£
1936-37	..	..	108,213	5,057	552	196	9.2
1935-36	..	..	94,293	3,388	484	194	7.0

With the improvement of their holdings and consequent growth of their herds, the installation of five more milking-machines for settlers is now warranted.

Work carried out for the past year comprised—Fencing: 514 chains of new fencing erected, mainly subdivisional, 123 chains of repairs and renovations, and 1,250 posts and 1,200 battens split and packed out; 103 chains of new drains opened and general drain cleaning undertaken; 101 acres of scrubbing and general cleaning-up of scattered areas of manuka and blackberry, and 75 acres of this was surface-sown; 41 acres of stumping in preparation for ploughing was completed; 92 acres were ploughed of which 38 acres were worked and sown down in permanent grasses and the balance sown in crops.

A portion of the new development work has been carried out under the employment promotion scheme. This has materially assisted the settlers in developing their holdings and supplementing their incomes where sections are not yet fully productive.

The settlers have displayed commendable energy, and an increasing number of holdings are now rapidly attaining the status of good dairy farms.