

Further developmental work undertaken comprised an area of 60 acres, which was logged and chipped, while drains and fencing were maintained and 60 chains of new fencing were erected. Measures are also being taken for protection against river-erosion, to which the block is subject. The live-stock at 31st March consisted of 6 bulls (including 2 pedigree animals), 102 cows, 40 springing heifers, 35 calves, and 17 pigs, which gives the carrying-capacity of the block as 1 cow to 3 acres.

The farm is run very efficiently by a Maori manager who has three helpers, one of whom is gaining experience and should eventually be established on a portion of the block as a separate unit farmer.

Tuparoa.

Taking its name from a village on the coast east of Ruatoria, this scheme covers an area of 10,211 acres, and comes under the category of a "blanket" scheme. Geographically it is located for the most part between the Tuparoa Village and the northern boundary of the Akuaku block, and between Whareponga Village on the sea side and the main highway.

The Tuparoa consolidation scheme was applied for in 1922, but as a result of unavoidable delays in determining the interests in the block, it was 1929 before the Native Land Court finalized the titles of the land. Within the triangle denoted by Whareponga, Tuparoa, and Ruatoria a large area went to the Crown and a number of titles went to the Native owners. The whole of the coastal area of this triangle was unfenced and covered with tauhinu and manuka, while neighbouring stock overran the land. There were some small areas partly farmed, but not to any degree of efficiency. The first step towards the development of these blocks was taken in the winter of 1931. As part of an old sheep-station all these lands carried fair sheep pasture, and being of papa formation were eminently suitable for sheep and cattle. The development of the Whareponga blocks, between June, 1931, and April, 1932, to the point of carrying over eight thousand sheep and a large number of cattle was a record for the Native land development schemes of the Dominion in scope, speed to production point, efficiency, and economy.

It has been recognized that the ultimate subdivision of this area depended on road access. In the past, access to the Whareponga block was almost non-existent, wool having to be taken by surf-boat from the beach to coastal vessels. But with the completion of eight miles of road, connecting the scheme with the main highway at Hiruharama, and formed by unemployed Natives, a further milestone in the progress of the district was established when the road was officially opened by the Acting Native Minister the Hon. Mr. F. Langstone, on 19th March, 1937.

Whareponga sheep station, commonly called Repo Station, comprising over 5,376 acres of reasonably good coastal country, is the main farm in the scheme. It is eight miles in a coastal direction from the main East Coast Highway and five miles southwards from Ruatoria. At present it is carrying 6,000 sheep and 826 cattle, while the receipts for the past season totalled £6,415, the wool cheque producing £4,976 from 65,477 lb.

To a great number of the Ngatiporou people Whareponga has been the real manifestation of developmental activities on the coast, as the blocks comprise the main holdings of a large proportion of the members of the tribe. The fact that considerable profits have been made in the past few years and that these profits will revert to themselves is taken by them as proof that Native land development is carried on for the benefit of the Maori and not for the State. A general meeting of the owners was held recently and a copy of the annual accounts was presented to the committee, who expressed gratification and approval of the manner in which the station is being run. It has been left to the owners to decide whether they will take the property over and subdivide it, or leave the management in the hands of the Department.

The other sheep station, Akuaku A 124, covers an area of 563 acres. In addition to the two sheep stations, there are 7 unit farmers who, together with 21 additional labourers and 95 dependants, bring the total number supported by the scheme to 123 persons.

Waiapu-Matakaoa.

Up to the year 1925 sheep farming was the only real agricultural pursuit that the Maoris of the Waiapu and Matakaoa Counties engaged in. In 1925 a dairy factory was established at Ruatoria, having been made possible by reason of the fact that the titles to much of the land suitable for dairying had been adjusted and settled under consolidation schemes. The new industry had taken a firm hold and was expanding rapidly, but much remained to be done to improve the farms and herds. At the beginning of 1930 it was estimated that less than one-third of the area suitable for dairying was devoted to that purpose.

It is probable that but for the depression, which began to be seriously felt in sheep farming districts early in 1930 and was already causing unemployment, the provisions of the Act of 1929 would not have been applied to lands in the Waiapu and Matakaoa Counties. The droughts of the 1930-31 and 1931-32 seasons, with the failure of the potato crops, added to the drop in the price of farm products, and increasing unemployment compelled Maori landowners to apply for assistance under the new scheme.

This "blanket" scheme consists of a number of small blocks in nowise connected except that, for convenience of accounting, they are grouped into one control account. Ruatoria, Tikitiki, and Te Araroa are the three centres from which the sections radiate. The scheme covers many classes of country, from the fertile Tikitiki dairy flats to the steep country in the Matakaoa area. Every hapu of the Ngati-Porou tribe has sections under development.

Activities during the year have produced the following figures, which show the very considerable amount of work that has been done: 1,054 acres have been felled and cleared; nearly 27 miles of new fencing have been erected, while repairs to fences cover another 16½ miles; 177 chains of new