

Waiapu-Matakaoa.

Waiapu-Matakaoa is the name given to a large number of scattered holdings in the Waiapu and Matakaoa Counties. The sections are divided roughly into groups: Hahau is at the mouth of the Waiapu River, and following up the river's course are Hinetiraha, Pohooterangi, Tikitiki, and Herupara on the northern bank, Tikapa and Herenga on the south-eastern bank, and Mangaoporo ten miles to the north of the Tikitiki group on the Poroporo River. The actual gazetted area is 13,464 acres, but of this, 3,417 acres, which are situated in the Wharekahika (Matakaoa) scheme, have been separated from the balance and grouped with the latter scheme for the purposes of this report. An area of 3,168 acres of dairying country, which consists mostly of good river-flats, has been developed. The condition of the land in the several groups before development and at the present day is as follows:

Hahau (fifteen sections totalling 845 acres) was practically all covered with heavy gorse and tawhinu, but now is all cleared and one-third has been ploughed and sown in good English grasses, whilst the balance in ratstail and native grasses is gradually being ploughed and treated in the same manner.

Hinetiraha and Pohooterangi (708 acres of dairying land) were badly infested with rushes and inclined to be swampy. To-day of the eighteen sections in this group, a considerable acreage has been brought into good pasture.

Tikitiki and Herupara (thirty-four sections).—On these sections, of which approximately 1,315 acres comprise dairying country, 600 acres were in standing bush, whilst the balance was all in scattered scrub. The bush has been felled and grassed, and all excepting 200 acres of the scrub area has been cleared and sown.

Tikapa (sixteen dairy sections covering approximately 300 acres) was in fair condition before development. An area of 76 acres has been cleared of scrub. One-third of the block is good flat dairy land, whilst the remainder is easy hill grazing-country. The sheep area of 3,215 acres is worked as twelve farms, of which three, covering 1,567 acres, are entirely sheep stations, the balance being mixed sheep and dairy farms. On the three main farms 750 acres were in bush prior to development, but this has now been felled, burnt, and sown down in good English pasture. The balance of these areas comprises good easy hill country in native grasses.

The number of settlers located in the entire scheme total ninety-six, whilst their dependants number 463. Generally speaking, the health of the community is good. Housing conditions are better than those of any other scheme in the district, as evinced by the number of new houses erected since development began—namely, thirty-two. Three more are at present under construction.

Live-stock figures at the 31st March, were: Milking-cows, 1,661; other dairy stock, 495; run cattle, 332; breeding-ewes, 2,778; dry sheep, 1,735; working-horses, 217.

Herd testing was undertaken last season, the figures for the year showing an improvement on the previous period. A feature was the attainment of Mrs. H. Nepia to fourth place in the Ahuwhenua Trophy Competition. A progressive move was made during the year in the formation of pig clubs in this district. The flood of February, 1938, adversely affected about thirty settlers, but steps have been taken to rectify the damage. Details of the year's work and other information is given in the tables at the end of this section of the report.

Taken on the whole, the future prospects of the settlers are exceedingly promising, as they have the advantage of possessing good fertile country and the necessary incentive to work this land with success.

Poroporo.

Uruahi Station, situated between the Mangaoporo and Poroporo Rivers, and fronting the East Coast main highway six miles from Ruatoria, comprises 2,103 acres of moderately easy hill country, about 200 acres of which were originally in fern and scrub, the balance being covered in standing bush. The quality of land is good, being of a light loamy nature. The planting of willows and poplars has been carried out to check erosion and slipping, and about 100 acres have been resown in paspalum and subterranean clover. The station is efficiently managed by a European and three permanent hands. Pastures are in good order, and the stock continues to improve as the percentage of bred stock increases. The live-stock figures at the end of the year are as follows: 3,121 breeding ewes, 1,971 dry sheep, 608 run cattle, and 3 pack-horses. This farm can definitely be classed as a successful venture, although the prospects of subdivision, owing to fencing difficulties, are remote.

The balance of the scheme comprises ten dairy-farms which are situated on the Whenuakura flats half-way between Ruatoria and Tikitiki, on the East Coast main highway. The 501 acres occupied are all good river-flats with the exception of 80 acres of easy hills. Before development the area was covered with heavy tree-manuka and was of a swampy nature. The soil is a good heavy loam with a proportion of both peaty and shingle formations. The whole acreage is ploughable, and the development of the land is well advanced, with practically all the properties carrying their full quota of dairy stock. Cropping for winter feed is undertaken. The pastures are in good order. Dairy stock comprises 235 milking-cows and 74 other dairy beasts. The ten settlers maintain seventy-five dependants, and these people are of a good healthy type. Their housing conditions are fair, four new cottages having been erected for them since the scheme commenced, whilst the remaining dwellings are in reasonably good order. These settlers will shortly be entirely self-supporting.