

The principal activities carried out on scheme lands during the year included 4,729 acres of bushfelling and clearing, 3,952 chains of new fences erected, 2,074 chains of new drains constructed, 3,754 acres of grassing, and the splitting of 17,000 posts and 75,000 battens.

At the close of the year only seventeen cottages and seven large repair jobs had actually been completed, but another fifteen cottages are in various stages of construction. Other buildings erected during the year included seventeen cow-sheds, eight implement and manure-sheds, one wool-shed, twenty workmen's huts, and two stables and store-sheds. Extensive farm-maintenance work was also carried out.

The settlers' and scheme live-stock on the properties as at 31st March, 1938, included 2,370 dairy cows (milked), 1,046 other dairy stock, 1,623 run cattle, 10,176 breeding-ewes, 3,825 dry sheep, and 272 working-horses.

The number of bales of wool produced for the season was 206, and amounted to 75,112 lb. Of this total, 125 bales, totalling 49,020 lb., were sold and brought into the accounts as at 31st March, 1938. The balance of the wool was offered and sold at the last sale of the season and the credits will not be brought to account until next year.

The base farms or comprehensive schemes in the King-country district wintered approximately 3,560 breeding-ewes, which lambed down 3,340 lambs, giving an average of 93·7 per cent.

Aramiro.

This scheme comprises an area of 5,334 acres gazetted in November, 1937. Of this, roughly half the area is suitable for development. The scheme is situated about twenty-five miles from Frankton Junction, at Aramiro, a few miles south of Waitetuna on the Hamilton-Raglan Road. Development has been commenced only recently. Six labourers have been working, and seventeen dependants are relying on the scheme for their support. It is expected that when the programme arranged is fully under way this number will be greatly augmented by local unemployed Natives. The live-stock tally at 31st March was 58 cows, 17 other dairy stock, and 8 horses.

It is proposed to establish immediately two settlers who are already milking on separate holdings. The remainder of the suitable area will be developed in a face, and used as a stock station until it is ready for subdivision. To this end a local foreman will shortly be engaged.

The land is a good clay loam, but is badly infested with noxious weeds. There are some 3,000 acres of bush on the rear portion of the property. It is hoped that a considerable amount of this standing timber will be milled prior to clearing.

An initial building programme comprising three cottages and six huts has been approved and handed to the Public Works Department for early erection. Housing conditions of the Native people at this settlement have been the subject of very unfavourable comment and have been reflected in their general poor health and high mortality rate. By a steady building programme it is hoped to raise the standard of living amongst the people.

Hangatiki.

Hangatiki base farm, situated about one mile from Hangatiki, comprises an area of 556 acres of a light friable loam soil which responds well to treatment. There are approximately 500 acres of easy undulating country and the balance consists of drainable swamp land. The whole area is capable of successful settlement.

The farm maintains twelve adults and eleven children, whose health during the year has been excellent. A foreman in charge of five workers has shown a great interest in the working of the property.

Of the 194 acres cleared during the year, approximately 100 acres will be sown down in permanent pasture during April and the remaining 94 acres in temporary pasture.

Live-stock consisted of 81 (i/c) Jersey heifers, 220 ewes, and 155 dry sheep. The heifers were purchased as yearlings in the spring, and it is intended to transfer them to settlers who require dairy stock to replenish their herds.

This property will, when pastures are consolidated, lend itself for subdivision into five good dairy-farms. Future prospects are considered bright.

Harataunga.

Located on the Coromandel Peninsula, this scheme includes six active settlers—four at Kennedy's Bay, one at Whangapoua, and one at Ahimia. Another property of 366 acres at Whangapoua has been proclaimed, but owing to title and nomination difficulties no start has yet been made regarding development of this area. The block comprises 1,248 acres varying greatly in quality—approximately 330 acres of good alluvial flats, 850 acres of medium hill country which can be brought in by clearing, burning off, and grassing, the balance being poor-quality hills and not suitable for successful development. There are approximately 264 acres in permanent pasture, and 88 acres have been sown down during the year. With regard to pastures, it is interesting to note that when these lands were first taken under the scheme the existing pasture comprised for the most part root-bound paspalum, but with top-dressing, clover and rye have come back, and there has been a remarkable improvement in the grasses generally.

Six settlers have now been commenced as dairy-farmers, and the scheme maintains 102 Natives. Work has been carried out both by the settlers and unemployed Natives during the year. One cottage and one cow-shed were erected. It is hoped to erect two more cottages during the coming year and carry out extensive repair work on one cottage. The settlers will then be well housed. The workers themselves are a fine type of Native and show initiative and ability. Excessive drinking is unknown, the health has been good, and future prospects are considered to be bright.