

The Rotorua Nursery now raises trees for practically all the development schemes controlled by this Department in the North Island. The following table shows the disposal of trees for the past year :—

District.					Number of Trees.
Tokerau	..	..	..	..	16,950
Waikato	..	..	..	..	88,150
Tairāwhiti	..	..	..	..	48,000
Aotea	..	..	..	..	16,000
Waiariki	..	..	..	..	219,065
					388,165

Seedless-barberry cuttings, numbering 250,000, were planted in the nursery last year, and, of these, over 60 per cent. have taken root. Over 11,800 good plants were sent to the North Auckland and Bay of Plenty schemes, and there are now approximately 138,000 in the nursery, of which 50 per cent. are ready for planting this season. Experience has shown that these cuttings do not flourish too well in this district, but an effort will be made to maintain a regular supply for lands on which live hedges are required for shelter.

The stock of trees in the nursery at the 31st March, 1938, consisted of 655,000 three-year-old trees and 1,592,000 two-year-old seedlings. Periodical inspections are made by the foreman to the various plantations and shelter-belts in the district, and any gaps are filled up as occasions arise. The staff of the nursery consists of twelve men, and the project supports a total of seventeen adults and thirty-two minors.

Arawa.

Taking its name from the historic Arawa canoe, this scheme of 205 acres now comprises three properties in the vicinity of Rotorua. One settler's section of 47 acres was excluded from the scheme towards the close of the year under review.

The first section, situated at Mangorewa-Kaharoa, on the south-western shores of Lake Rotorua, consists of 121 acres of undulating land. Approximately 80 acres were stumped and cleared, 150 chains of new fencing erected, all old fences repaired, and 5 chains of drains cleaned. The old cottage occupied by this settler was renovated. At 31st March, 300 wethers were grazing on the property, and during the coming year it is intended to grass 90 acres and continue with the cleaning and draining of the section.

Another property is adjacent to the former and consists of nearly 35 acres. In the year under review a new cottage was erected on the section, and, in addition to clearing noxious weeds, 15 chains of fencing were erected and 10 chains of old fencing renewed. This settler is milking ten cows.

The remaining section of 49 acres is attractively situated at the base of Kawaha Point, about three miles from Rotorua, off the main highway to Hamilton. The principal work carried out comprised the clearing of 9 acres, the ploughing and sowing down of 9 acres, the erection of 10 chains of fencing, the cleaning of 15 chains of drains, and the old cottage on the farm was renovated and a new cow-shed and yards erected. This settler milked eight cows. There were also depasturing on this section during the winter and until December, 119 ewes.

These three sections found employment for six workers and support a total of nine adults and seven minors.

Brents Farm.

This property, three miles and a half from Rotorua on the main Rotorua-Whakatane Road, comprises 335 acres and is the base farm for practically all stock movements in the Rotorua Central area. All pastures are in first-class condition, and the land, covered as it is with the Rotomahana mud shower, is ideal and centrally situated for the purposes of a base farm.

During the year 15,000 sheep were shorn, 15,600 sheep crutched, and 24,063 sheep dipped at this base. The whole of the Department's sheep in the Rotorua Central area were shorn this year at one or other of the three sheds—namely, Brents, Okere, and Rotoiti. This was considered a much more efficient method than shearing on each individual scheme.

In addition to fulfilling the function of a base farm, the following stock was carried at the end of March, 1938: 362 ewes, 91 rams, 536 wethers, 213 lambs, 8 B.P. bulls, 8 bullocks, 55 yearling M.S. cattle, and 17 draught horses. The run cattle and the horses were waiting transfer to other schemes, as required.

A stockman is in charge of this farm, and between twenty and thirty adult labourers were engaged in the seasonal works of shearing, dipping, and general farm activities. The shearers' accommodation and living-quarters, including the cookhouse, were renovated and improved prior to the shearing season, and the benefit thus afforded to those engaged on this work fully justified the expenditure.

Okareka.

The Okareka Block (Section 6, Block 11, Tarawera Survey District), comprising some 1,322 acres, was purchased from the Lands Department in June, 1937, for development. It is situated some seven miles from Rotorua on the Rotorua-Okareka Road, and abuts on to Lake Okareka and the Department's Puketawhero and Wharenui lands (Tihiotonga station). The country is somewhat rough and broken, but has a good layer of Rotomahana mud, and is undoubtedly good healthy sheep and cattle country. The main road on the southern boundary gives good access, but further internal roading is necessary to give access through the block and so assist the top-dressing and general farming of the property.