

In October last an accidental fire on adjoining property carried on to this scheme, and some 520 acres were burnt. This area was immediately sown in grass and top-dressed, and under the circumstances a good strike of grass was obtained. With heavy stocking of sheep and cattle, together with harrowing and the resowing of some of the bare patches, it is considered that a good pasture will be established. A further 600 acres were burnt and sown in March, 1938, and an excellent take resulted. This latter area will be top-dressed in July. Although the autumn is the proper period in which to burn and sow this country, the spring sowing was favoured with good rain just after the seed was spread.

At the 31st March there were 2,635 two- and four-tooth wethers on this property. These had been bought off the shears late in November, and good results have been achieved in keeping down the fern. Some four miles and a half of fences subdividing the section into four paddocks have been completed, and during the ensuing year a further four miles of fencing will probably be undertaken, and this should complete the boundary and subdivisional fencing. A house for the foreman-shepherd, and also a stable for the horse teams, have been erected, while fourteen portable huts have been provided for the workmen engaged. Some twenty-two men have been kept in practically constant work, scrub-cutting, grass-seed sowing, top-dressing, and fencing, and, in all, thirty-eight adults and sixty-two children have been supported by the scheme.

The coming year's programme will include still further heavy stocking with wethers and run cattle to keep down the fern and consolidate the pastures. An effort is being made to augment the water-supply by boring on the higher levels.

Okataina.

Post-splitting operations on the Okataina bush scheme of 13,847 acres, situated about thirty miles from Rotorua to the eastward of the main Whakatane Road, ceased in February, 1938, the timber that could be profitably split and which was readily accessible to the present road having been worked out. The number of men engaged on this block numbered five, and in all fourteen adults and twelve children were dependent on the work. The labourers have now been transferred to the Oruanui bush scheme.

The production of Okataina scheme for the past year totalled 16,691 posts, 388 strainers, and 24,376 battens, these being issued to various Rotorua Central and Bay of Plenty schemes.

Tikitere.

This block, which is situated approximately twelve miles from Rotorua on the main Whakatane Road, comprises some 2,743 acres, of which approximately 550 acres are being run as dairy-farms by five settlers. The contour of this country is flat to easy undulating, with a few steep faces broken by gullies, bordering on the hot-springs area. The water for three farms is supplied from a good spring on one section where there is a Diesel-engine pump forcing the water to cisterns from which it gravitates to the various other sections. Approximately 180 acres to 200 acres of hay and ensilage were harvested, and some good crops of swedes were grown for winter feed. The settlers on this area are a good type, being industrious and anxious to make a success of their farming operations.

The live-stock on hand as at 31st March included 230 milking-cows, 99 other dairy stock, and 182 run cattle.

The Paehinahina area, of 500 acres, grassed the previous year, has taken well, and with top-dressing is coming in very satisfactorily.

About one mile and a half of draining, four miles of fencing, and 100 acres of scrubbing comprised the main work for eight men engaged on this block, and they support six adults and fifteen children.

The scheme wintered 1,200 wethers and 90 Black Poll cows, which came through in good condition. The balance area of Tikitere has been maintained with top-dressing and is now becoming well consolidated.

Additional to the dairying beasts, the following stock was carried : 5,926 sheep and 182 run cattle.

Tikitere : Waikato.

Containing 590 acres, on which four dairy farms have been established, there are some 332 acres of very good flat to undulating country in this scheme.

There will be at least one more settler established as a dairy-farmer this coming season. The live-stock on hand at 31st March was 156 milking-cows and 240 other dairy stock.

In the early part of the season the settlers were engaged on the subdivisional fencing of their sections. The lower part of this area was originally heavy gorse country, and it will require careful attention to avoid the gorse again taking control. On the higher flats there was a prolific growth of pasture in the late spring and early summer, and owing to the wet weather encountered during haymaking, some trouble was experienced in the harvesting. However, some 420 tons of hay were conserved.