

A stand of lucerne was established during the year, and a heavy growth of ragwort on portion of the area was treated with sodium. The fences were repaired, buildings painted, the water-supply extended, and the pastures top-dressed.

A herd of twenty-five heifers was purchased, and dairying on wages will be commenced next season. It is anticipated that at the end of two years the holding will be in good heart and can be permanently settled.

Lucerne established, 5 acres; ragwort treated, 15 acres; pastures top-dressed, 56 acres; hay saved, 12 tons. Fences repaired and buildings painted.

*Tokoroa Block (5,400 Acres).*

(Control: Land-development Superintendent, Auckland.)

This block is an Education endowment situated nineteen miles south of Putaruru on the Putaruru-Taupo main highway. Development was commenced under the small-farms scheme in April. The land is flat to undulating, growing stunted manuka, manaoa, tussock, and fern. Although this land is in the "sick" area, it is confidently expected that this can be overcome by the use of cobalt top-dressing.

Pasture-establishment will probably be somewhat slower than on other pumice areas in the district, as the land has little natural humus and the climate is fairly severe.

The Putaruru-Mokai Timber Railway runs past the block and a siding and a goods-shed at a convenient point on this line was the first major work.

A cottage was erected for the overseer and a single-men's camp was established. Clearing, tractor cultivation, and grassing was put in hand immediately, and at the end of the year 298 acres had been sown in grass and 60 acres in swedes.

A small herd of breeding-heifers was purchased late in the year and is being wintered on the area.

Posts are obtained from an area of bush in the district, and this has permitted fencing to be kept up to schedule.

Development is as yet in the initial stages and it is too early to accurately forecast the measure of success which may be expected. Situated, as it is, on the outskirts of a progressive dairying district, and with all the necessary facilities close at hand, the decision to develop and settle this large area of virgin land could not be delayed.

Twenty-five men are employed.

*Pueroa Block (12,000 Acres).*

(Control: Land-development Superintendent, Auckland.)

Four large areas of virgin undulating to hilly pumice Crown land on the Rotorua-Taupo Road were amalgamated under this title, and development was commenced during the year. A further 120 acres of partly developed freehold land conveniently situated was purchased, and the cottage on this area provides accommodation for the overseer.

All this land is well served with good road access and lends itself readily to cultivation with tractors and three- or four-furrow ploughs; consequently, rapid progress in pasture establishment is possible.

The land is healthy for stock, and stock purchased and depastured on the freehold area have done exceptionally well.

Three camps were established, together with the necessary store-sheds, and three tractors with cultivation equipment were put to work following the clearing of the scrub by hand.

As instancing the rapid progress possible in this type of land, 1,590 acres was cleared during the portion of the year worked, and 510 acres were cultivated and ready for sowing.

Other works carried out were draining on a good-quality swamp area, fencing, and road-formation.

A comprehensive topographical survey was completed of this block during the year, and all available sources of water-supply thoroughly investigated.

Development is as yet only in its initial stages, but the success attending the development of similar land in this district augurs well for the future of the conveniently placed areas forming this block.

Pasture-establishment is rapid, and established pastures stand up very well to dry weather conditions.

Further stock purchases will be necessary in the coming year.

Eighty-three men are employed.

*Waikite Block (5,400 Acres).*

(Control: Land-development Superintendent, Auckland.)

This area lies immediately east of Ngakuru, a formed road through this giving access to the block. Negotiations are in hand to have this road continued through the block, when through access will be possible. Development in this area was held up pending the evacuation of Native interests from areas aggregating 1,200 acres in the block. At the close of the year negotiations were sufficiently far advanced to enable development to proceed.

The land is flat to undulating and lends itself to ready cultivation with tractor ploughs.

A single-men's camp was established late in the year and work concentrated on forming sufficient roading to permit of access to this camp and clearing for future cultivation.

A comprehensive topographical survey was in hand on this and adjoining areas of Crown land, and this will permit of a complete scheme of roading subdivision and water-supply being drawn up.