

Manukau.

Situated adjacent to the Kaitaia Herekino Road, this property of 830 acres of easy to steep clay loam country is now well subdivided. Much fencing, logging, and clearing have been done, and 100 acres have been cultivated preparatory to sowing down in grass. The quality and condition of the stock running on this scheme reflect the benefit of top-dressing the pasture. Last season an excellent sole of grass was put down, and this was grazed with in-calf heifers, which were later transferred to established settlers.

Work is being given to ten men in procuring from an adjoining State forest area a large quantity of first-class kauri timber which will be utilized for housing construction in the Manukau district. Last June 44 men with 102 dependants were employed on the area, but the majority of them will shortly be transferred to a nearby public-works job.

All the stock is in good condition, though losses from worrying by dogs were heavy among the sheep, and during the winter many deaths of lambs resulted from lung worm.

Consequent upon an inspection of the block during the year preparatory to the establishment of a number of settlers, it was decided to readjust some of the sections to permit of economic farms being established. The proposed adjustments to the boundaries have been referred to the Native Land Court for discussion with the beneficial owners, and when this has been completed a commencement will be made with the erection of dwellings and sheds and the establishment of individual settlers.

The live-stock carried at 31st March, 1939, comprised 206 run cattle, 205 dry sheep, and 27 horses.

Mohinui.

Formerly farmed by development settlers, this property of 773 acres, situated south of Kawakawa, is now being worked as one block. It comprises mostly easy ridges with a little bush in the gullies, and occasional limestone outcrops. In 1931 an area of 400 acres was surface sown, but the resultant pasture was poor. The ploughing of a large portion of the block will now be necessary. As the majority of the owners are absentees, an early subdivision will not be undertaken.

Some 40 acres have been ploughed and sown down during the past season, and 20 acres of standing tea-tree were felled, burnt, and grassed. As suitable labour was not available here to carry out essential development work, a Native contractor was employed with his tractor to carry out the cultivation. The stock-work, repairing of fences, and other farm maintenance were carried out by two workmen employed at standard rates of pay. A wool-shed and sheep-yards were erected.

As a result of a shortage of feed during the spring months, combined with the fact that lambing was early, sheep losses were fairly heavy, while the aftermath of the facial-eczema epidemic was also very much in evidence. The disease was not apparent to any marked degree during the main epidemic, but delayed internal disorders became evident during the winter months.

There are five women and fifteen children dependent on the workers of this scheme. The live-stock tally was 43 run cattle and 537 sheep.

Ngataki.

Situated at Ngataki, in the far North, between Te Kao and Houhora, and comprising 2,700 acres, this block, which is classed as marginal land, was handed over to the Native Department by the Lands Department for the settlement of Natives from Te Hapua. To-day there is a total of 155 Te Hapua people on the scheme, comprising 35 men, 27 women, and 93 children. The health of the community has been excellent, and an unmistakable brightness in the demeanour of the people is apparent, especially among the children.

It is not proposed to undertake a heavy building programme until the results of the experiment of cultivation at Ngataki are revealed, but even the temporary accommodation at present provided is an improvement on their former living-conditions at Te Hapua.

The development activities embraced the following : 340 acres of clearing, 535 chains of new fencing, 450 chains of new draining and the clearing of 385 chains of old drains, 34 chains of roading, and the cultivation and grassing of 200 acres, the filling-in of gum holes on 25 acres, the planting of 500 macrocarpa trees, the quarrying of 200 cubic yards of sand-rock for road repairs, the splitting of 940 posts, 81 strainers, 600 battens, and 6 stringers : while to enable the fencing programme to be proceeded with 6,000 puriri posts and 1,166 strainers were transferred from the Mangatete bush block near Kaitaia.

Next year it is proposed to establish a tree nursery at Ngataki to meet the afforestation requirements of the far North and at the same time to provide a useful avenue of employment for local Natives.

Okaroro.

This property, comprising an area of 1,760 acres, is situated to the south of the Otiria Railway-station. The soil varies from good limestone on the front to medium to hard clay at the back. Progress with the work of restoring the pastures has been contingent upon the labour supply, fifteen men only having been employed.