

Climatic conditions have been unfavourable : a dry autumn, followed by a wet winter and spring, and then a hot and windy summer, have been detrimental to the stock, losses being heavier than usual. The majority of the sheep escaped the ezeema in this area, but the lambing percentage was, in common with the general experience in the district, very poor : likewise, the calving percentage among the cattle was low, and numerous losses occurred among the old cows. With the improvement made in the fencing, much better use can be made of the cattle in the control of the pastures. Bidi-bidi has a fairly strong hold on the front portion of the place and it will take heavy stocking and manuring to eradicate the pest.

The principal development activities during the past year embraced the clearing of 640 acres, 140 chains of new fencing with repairs to 80 chains, the digging of 85 chains of drains, and the cultivation of 640 acres ; while in addition, the wool-shed was enlarged, new sheep-yards were erected, and six workmen's huts (20 ft. by 14 ft.) were built ; a water-supply was laid on to the hutments ; and fourteen bridges over the creeks and drains are being constructed.

The property was running the following stock : 395 run cattle, 556 breeding-ewes, and 663 dry sheep.

Opapaki.

Located near Otiria, an additional area of 112 acres has recently been taken over, making the total area of this property 997 acres.

An area of 100 acres has been ploughed and is being laid down in grass. A railway goods-shed which will serve this and neighbouring schemes and Native properties has been erected at Motatau, and will provide a much-needed amenity. A further area of 10 acres of swamp between the road and the railway-line which has not previously been occupied will be taken over during the next year. Arrangements are under way to have 60 chains of road formed to give access to the back of the block and to a development settler.

The stock comprised 122 run cattle and 474 sheep.

Oturei.

Lying towards the coast from Te Kopuru, in the Dargaville district, this area of 1,803 acres of Native land was recently brought under departmental control. It is estimated that, of the total area, some 600 acres located on the west of the block and extending from the sea coast inland for a distance of about 95 chains will be capable of economic development for dairying. The land being developed consists of a light sandy loam, and a water-supply can be obtained from a small lake near the coast.

A large number of men has been given employment in the clearing, cultivating, and fencing, while a new cottage, an implement-shed, and four hutments for the workers have also been erected. An area of 100 acres is being sown this autumn. Twelve women and forty children are dependent upon the workers of this scheme.

Climatic conditions up to the present have been very dry. The only stock on the property is the seventeen working-bullocks, with which the majority of the carting and cultivation work has been carried out. An extensive programme has been planned for the ensuing year.

Oturu.

This property, containing an area of 569 acres, is situated near the Kaitiaki Kaingaroa main highway. It was a European-owned block which was purchased by the Department towards the end of this year in order to permit of the enlargement of the several uneconomic sections being farmed by the adjoining Natives.

The country is well watered by streams and swamps, while the land varies from flat to rolling puriri bush country, comprising 50 acres of swamp, 40 acres of standing bush, and 300 acres of rough paspalum pasture. The balance is in gorse, tea-tree, and rough feed. A large quantity of first-class puriri timber is easily procurable and will supply the fencing requirements of the area.

At the present time the Public Works Department is proceeding with the roading of the block, all available workmen being employed on that job. This work will be completed in the near future, when the active development of the block will be commenced. Stock for grazing will be placed on the property immediately the fencing is sufficiently renovated to hold the cattle.

Ounuwaho.

Containing an area of 2,371 acres, this station is situated about three miles from the Dargaville sawyards and factory. The land varies in contour from undulating to hilly country, and is fairly well watered. The work available on this scheme has provided useful employment throughout the year for a large number of men, as many as fifty-six being employed at one stage, although the normal number ranges between thirty to forty. Several of these men travel from their homes in Dargaville each day, while the balance are accommodated in hutments or tents. A water-supply duly approved