

*Whatawhata Block* (301 Acres), (Locality : Whatawhata).—This block was taken over for ex-servicemen and three are to be settled in July. The necessary fencing, building, &c., have been erected. The property is an attractive one.

*General Report on the Position and Progress of Established Civilian Tenants*

This branch is handling thirty-five civilian settlers established on blocks previously controlled by the Waikato Land Settlement Society.

In all cases these men are meeting their commitments and their farming activities have been very satisfactory.

Ragwort is prevalent on quite a number of sections, but the settlers appreciate the need for constant attention to this noxious weed and are handling the situation very well. In one or two isolated cases the ragwort has been a major problem, but with the assistance of the County Council the weed has been brought under control.

As these sections were in the drought area, a number of them have felt the position very much.

Applications have been received for the provision of finance for hay. In a few cases only will it be necessary to secure advances from the Land Settlement Board to meet this expenditure. In the other instances there is sufficient revenue in their current accounts to cover the outgoings.

Several of these civilian settlers have made applications for disposal of their sections to ex-servicemen, and these cases are now under consideration.

COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS, NORTH AUCKLAND

The majority of the development areas in this land district are controlled by the Superintendent of Land Development, Auckland, but the following areas are controlled by the Commissioner :—

*Matariki Farm Settlement* (Locality : Whangarei).—This property is being prepared for subdivision as three units. A herd of about 80 cows has been milked during the year on the fully developed section, the two partially developed sections being used as a run-off. These two sections are partly in rough grass, but it was not possible, owing to shortage of fertilizers and suitable labour, to clear and lay down in grass the undeveloped areas. Run cattle have been grazed on these sections with beneficial effect on the pastures. All necessary boundary and subdivisional fencing has been completed. Contracts have been let by the Housing Construction Department for all necessary buildings. The provision of an adequate water-supply has been investigated and arrangements are now in hand for the carrying-out of this work.

*Ruawai Block* (Locality : Ruawai).—This block comprises two separate properties several miles apart, one consisting of river flat and the other hill country. One dairying unit has been taken over by the Native Department for the settlement of a Maori discharged serviceman, and the balance of the areas will provide three dairying units, each with a winter run-off. About 120 cows have been milked on the whole area during the present season under a share-milking agreement, and a certain amount of development work, including subdivisional fencing and water reticulation, has been carried on simultaneously with the dairying operations. Contracts have been let by the Housing Construction Department for necessary dwellings and cow-sheds.

*Riponui Farm Settlement* (Locality : Whangarei).—Possession of this property was taken in December, 1945, and two dairying units will be provided. Two new cow-sheds are required, and arrangements have been made to erect these on a day-labour basis. Work on the first shed has been commenced, and other development work, including improvement of water-supply, is in progress. Run cattle and sheep are being grazed pending the commencement of dairying operations by the Department in the 1946-47 season.