

On going through the report by Messrs. Bruce and Dobson, which is a very comprehensive one, and colouring up a map of the proposed irrigation of Central Otago to agree with the said report (which had not been done previously, and which will give you a comprehensive idea of the areas reported upon, together with the acreage of the various blocks), I think the following synopsis will be of considerable assistance to you in arriving at a decision in this matter :—

EARNSCLEUGH BLOCK.

The Earnsclough Block, shown on the map as Block I, is divided into two parts. The portion known as "Earnsclough Flat," opposite Alexandra, contains 5,400 acres, of which area 2,900 acres is fit for irrigation.

Blackman's Gully, another portion of this block, is well situated for fruit-growing, and extends from about 600 ft. above sea-level to an altitude of about 1,600 ft.; and about 1,500 acres of this portion could be irrigated profitably.

The total area of this block is 51,100 acres.

CLYDE BLOCK.

This is shown on map as Block II. The Clyde Block proper adjoins the Town of Clyde, and about 3,000 acres is fit for irrigation. The balance of Block II is reported as being absolutely unsuitable for irrigation. The total area is 60,600 acres.

TIGER HILL, LAUDER BLOCK.

This is shown on the map as Block III, the total area being 75,800 acres. Of this area a considerable portion is suitable for cultivation without irrigation, and there is also a block of about 35,000 acres fit for irrigation, extending from above Chatto Creek Railway-station to the Cambrians. The greater portion of this area is good agricultural land, composed of mica-schist soil with rich humus, and admirably adapted for irrigation. About 4,000 acres of this block is already irrigated, particularly so from below Tinkers to railway-line at Spottis Creek, and from Drybread to the main road at Lauder. There is a large area of flat land between Matakanui and Chatto Creek, and several table-lands between Thomson's and Lauder creeks, which are unsuitable for irrigation, owing to absence or poverty of soil in places, and the subsoil being of a cementy sandy gravel.

IDA VALLEY BLOCK.

This is shown on the map as Block IV, and contains 65,200 acres. About 52,500 acres is fit for irrigation. Almost the whole of this land on the south side of the railway-line is admirably adapted for irrigation, a very large portion being first-class agricultural land, which would undoubtedly become highly productive on the application of water. The local Irrigation Committee is so convinced of the suitability of this land for irrigation and the benefits to be derived therefrom that it offers from 10s. to £2 per week per sluice-head of water for about 100 heads for six months yearly. On either side of the Upper Poolburn there is a considerable area, approximately 4,330 acres, of highly fertile land on which irrigation would be unnecessary. The Ida Valley is considered an ideal field for irrigation, and the report states that the adoption of any scheme whereby water could be obtained, even at considerable expenditure, can be confidently recommended.

ROXBURGH BLOCK.

This is marked on the map as Block V. It is a small block containing only 9,600 acres. The greater part of the soil in this block is eminently suitable for fruit-growing. Most of the orchards are well managed, and provided with water from the mountain-streams.

CROMWELL BLOCK.

This is shown on the map as Block VI, and contains about 11,400 acres. It is situated at the Kawarau Gorge, and contains about 2,870 acres suitable for irrigation, 1,000 acres of which is already irrigated. The soil is decomposed mica-schist, intermixed with rich loam, possessing an extraordinary power of endurance under cultivation. There can be no doubt as to the benefits of discreet irrigation on this class of land, which without water would be practically valueless. Immediately adjoining this land lies the Cromwell Flat of about 4,700 acres of extremely disappointing country, not suitable for irrigation.

MOUNT PISA BLOCK.

This is shown on map as Block VII, the total area being 40,300 acres. From Lowburn this block follows the foothills to Luggate, thence along that stream to its junction with the Clutha River. A good deal of irrigation has been done in this block, but there is evidence that rapid percolation would render any comprehensive scheme of irrigation impracticable. The area of land fit for irrigation is only about 4,740 acres, which includes some 500 acres already irrigated.