

The reports of the Supervisor (Mr. C. M. Wright) show that up to the 31st March, 1932, in addition to 119 acres of grass already established, the new areas felled and grassed amounted to approximately 853 acres, making in all 972 acres. The stock in hand comprised 121 dairy cows and heifers and 85 mixed-sex calves. As for fencing, 1,500 posts were split and 85 chains erected. A small amount of draining and stumping was also done. The actual payments on the scheme to the 31st March, 1932, amounted to £1,379 16s. 1d., particulars of which are set out in the schedules hereto. But there were outstanding payments at that date for grass-seed, fencing material, and wages amounting to £853, which when taken into consideration would give an average cost of development at Kawhia up to the end of last financial year of £2 8s. 6d. an acre. Ten families were receiving assistance. It was estimated that a further expenditure of £3 an acre would bring these units to the point of farming efficiency and production, complete the ring-fencing and subdivision of sections, provide accommodation, cow-sheds, yards, and dairy equipment, increase the dairy stock to 240 milkers, and purchase sheep for areas not immediately available for dairying.

(b) *Oparure.*

This title was adopted for a scheme covering an area at Oparure, near Te Kuiti, comprising seven small blocks, of a total area of 191 acres and 34 perches, which were brought under section 23 of the Native Land Amendment, &c., Act, 1929, on the 12th May, 1931. Another block (Whanawhana Totorewa's) of 90 acres 2 roods 28 perches was added on the 1st August, 1931, and four more of a total area of 88 acres 1 rood 6 perches were added on the 15th February, 1932. The operations of the Mangapu Drainage Board had improved the prospects of settlement of Native lands within the drainage area, but there were complications in the titles and difficulties with the owners, which retarded progress and extension.

It is very desirable that Native lands situated so close to Te Kuiti, and under the eye, as it were, of the local taxing authority should be developed and brought into production. The drainage of the Mangapu Basin is removing the greatest physical obstacle to progress, but there are title and psychological obstacles, which can be removed only by patient and continued effort.

Although Cabinet approved the expenditure of £440 on this scheme, only £82 was expended to the 31st March, 1932. Delay in regard to consolidation proposals and complications with a dairy company prevented much progress. The work completed comprised the clearing and grassing of 70 acres, fencing 60 chains, and a little draining. Three units received assistance. Their properties were valued at £2,066. The area already in grass was 95 acres; there was one six-roomed house, an implement-shed and a cow-shed; there were 380 chains of fencing and 30 chains of drains. One settler was milking a herd of twenty-seven, but these were under bills of sale to a dairy company.

It was estimated that during the current year considerable progress would be made, and that the number of individuals to be assisted would be increased to ten. Development on ordinary lines would on the class of land available be expensive, having regard to the draining of low-lying land infested with blackberry, the clearing of timber and logs, and the working-up of heavy soil. A judicious combination of unemployment funds with development finance and an appeal to the Native owners to adopt a policy of self-reliance as far as possible should reduce costs to reasonable proportions in accord with the low level of prices for primary produce.

(c) *Mahoenui.*

Formal steps to bring this scheme into operation were taken at the beginning of April, 1930, when blocks comprising a total area of 3,527 acres 2 roods 19 perches were gazetted, and Cabinet authorized an expenditure of £3,500. Active development was not commenced, however, until the spring, with the clearing of 600-odd acres of light bush and manuka on the east of the highway.

The District Valuer in reporting on Mahoenui lands considered that the land was of fair quality and suitable for close settlement, but that it was badly infested with gorse, blackberry, and ragwort. Subsequent inspections showed that there was an abundance of water, should it be decided to cut up into dairy-farms. The country has wide frontage to the highway, off which there are two branch roads, one, the Totoro Road, constructed by the Public Works Department, penetrating the north-eastern portion of the block to the Mokau River, and the other, the Ngatarawa Road, bounding it at the southern end. An obstacle to effective development and subdivision was presented by the location of the interests acquired by the Crown, amounting to 945 acres, which were so situated as to raise difficulties in adjusting fencing-lines and bush-felling operations. It was represented to the Lands Department that the Crown interests should either be made available to be developed with the Native lands under the Native scheme, or the Crown should acquire further interests and by compacting them make them worth while to develop independently of the Native scheme. The Hon. the Minister of Lands decided in favour of the former course, but the addition of the Crown areas was not made till the 1931-32 financial year, when they came into the scope of the clearing programme for that year.

The actual payments on this scheme to the 31st March, 1931, amounted to £1,148 11s. 4d., but it was known that a considerable sum was then outstanding for wages, grass-seed, fencing-material, and other charges. The area sown down was 606 acres, while 49 acres were worked up for swedes and potatoes.

During 1931-32 a further area of 1,000 acres, half light bush and half manuka, was cleared, burnt, and grassed, while the fencing, subdivision, and stocking of the land cleared and grassed in the previous year were completed. The latter area was also top-dressed with fertilizers to ensure a good sward of grass. The policy of subsidizing from unemployment funds was applied to Mahoenui in the second year in order to assist unemployed Maoris of the King-country and Waikato. At one period there were eighty-three men employed on the scheme, and with women and children over 120 persons were assisted through means of the scheme.