

freehold are on the ground, so that six only of the twenty-four still holding on deferred payment are resident. Those living on their selections complained to me of the absenteeism, one of the reasons being that, owing to the population being so sparse, they are unable to get a school, and the children in some cases at the back are growing up untaught. Considerable improvements have been effected on the block. One-third is in grass, besides an additional 700 acres felled. Unfortunately, the last two seasons have been very bad for burns, which has been a great drawback to the settlers, not only in this locality, but throughout the district. There are fourteen dwellings of all shapes and sizes, ranging in value from £3 to £100, and a good deal of fencing. The total value of all the improvements made during the six years is £5,889—about £1 16s. 6d. an acre. Only one of the residents is in arrears with the improvements; but sixteen out of seventeen absentees are so, mainly on account of the double-improvement requirements, which I am insisting upon. There is not nearly the amount of stock that one would expect to find; but on inquiries I learnt that this is likely to be remedied during the coming year, as a number are going to put on sheep. The main road is gravelled. Altogether, of the thirteen miles of road which practically serves both this and the Danevirke Settlement, seven miles are formed and gravelled, one mile is being formed, the remainder is felled, with road-track cleared, and in fair condition for bush-roads. On the whole, the settlement may be considered a success. The residents are apparently hard working and industrious, and the non-residents have made extensive improvements far beyond what would have been required had they lived on their selections, and none are in arrears with their payments.

Danevirke Small-farm Association (Deferred Payment), Block XIII., Norsewood Survey District.—This settlement was formed in November, 1885, and is located near the township of the same name. Its situation was favourable on account of its proximity to the railway-line, its nearest point being about half a mile from Mangatera Station. It is level country, well watered, and was at the time of selection covered with forest. The association at the outset consisted of twenty-five members, who selected as many sections, comprising in all 1,900 acres. The results at the end of six years are very satisfactory, and the settlement must be considered an undoubted success. Five of the original twenty-five have acquired the freehold, four of whom are permanent residents, with good substantial residences. In a few cases settlers have acquired additional sections by transfer, so that the actual holdings at the present time are nineteen in number, twelve of whom are personally resident, and two others by substitutes. The houses, of which there are fourteen, are of a good class, with many excellent gardens, and young orchards, the whole surroundings suggestive of comfort and prosperity. Of the 1,900 acres in the settlement, more than half is in cultivation, and a further area felled, but not burnt, owing to the late bad burning seasons. The value of improvements effected is £4,350, an average of £2 5s. an acre on the total area of the settlement, including the unimproved lands. Only two of the selectors are in arrear with their payments, one of them having suffered lately through the burning-down of his house. This settlement is unquestionably a success, and has, I judge, fulfilled, if not exceeded, the most sanguine expectations, proving that, under ordinarily favourable conditions, moderate-sized areas can be advantageously and profitably occupied. It is gratifying to find that up to the present there is no tendency, either in this or the Waipawa Settlement, to the land being absorbed by a few. Where the freehold has been acquired the settlers are resident, and with every appearance of continuing to do so. Anyway, after an interval of six years, the two are practically as much small-farm settlements, and, in fact, more so, than at their initiation.

THOMAS HUMPHRIES,

Commissioner of Crown Lands.

APPENDIX No. 3.

PLANTATIONS.

WAIRANGI, AUCKLAND.

THE present state of the wattle portion of the plantation is decidedly favourable. All the trees are growing well and look very healthy, and in another year the whole area planted in wattle—379 acres—will be advanced enough to be thinned out and stripped. If extra labour had been employed last year half that area could have been thinned and stripped, and would have yielded on an average about a quarter of a ton to the acre. And this year the yield would have been much greater with the present labour employed had our labour been confined to stripping only, as clearing underscrub and pruning took up most of the time. The eucalyptus portion of the reserve, an area of about 500 acres, does not look very healthy, as every year, from November to the end of March, the trees are infested with green flying-grasshoppers, which eat off all the young leaves and shoots, and so permanently check their growth every year, though a large proportion of the trees range in height from 5ft. to 8ft. The general appearance of the oak-trees planted out on Section C (6,000 in number) is good, they all having made fair growth last summer, and a number of the trees average 3ft. to 5ft. in height. All the fencing erected round the reserve, which consists of seven wires and puriri posts, length about twelve miles, is in good order—as good as the day it was put up. The buildings are also in good order. Work completed for the past year is as follows: 1,020 Oregon pines (*Abies douglasii*) planted out 10ft. apart, holes dug 2ft. square, and ground cleared of scrub; 50 chains of boundary-fence lines cleared 4ft. wide; 120 chains fire-belts cleared round wattle boundaries, 12ft. wide; 13 acres of scrub cleared among wattles, and trees pruned and thinned; 24 acres of scrub cleared among eucalyptus; 4 acres of scrub cleared among young oak-trees, and trees hoed round; 7 acres cleared, ploughed, disc-harrowed, tine-harrowed, and brushed, sown with 2½ tons of bone-dust, and laid down in grass; 21 chains of temporary fencing pulled down,