

But, generally speaking, the applicants appeared to be of a satisfactory stamp, and to be possessed of fair means and abilities for turning their holdings to successful use, while there was a decided absence of the practice of whole families, from the father and mother down to the youngest eligible son or daughter, entering for the ballots.

As regards the settlements which have been established for some time, the following table and notes embody the results of the Rangers' reports :—

Name of Settlement.	Area held, 31st March, 1897.			Area open for Selection, 31st March, 1897.			Value of Improvements			Number of Selectors Resident.	Number of Souls Resident.	Remarks.			
							Required.	Effected.							
	A.	R.	P.	A.	R.	P.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.			
Pareora	537	3	17	73	3	38	363	18	10	1,955	0	0	25	133	A good settlement, but hold- ings too small to maintain settlers without extraneous work.
Studholme Junction..	104	2	8	..	..	..	36	12	3	220	8	0	3	18	
Kapua	572	1	22	..	..	..	269	16	0	913	3	0	10	42	All settlers doing well.
Rosebrook	600	1	8	..	..	..	152	16	9	1,420	13	0	9	50	A promising settlement.
Otaio	367	0	33	..	..	..	108	7	4	593	1	6	4	16	Should be successful.
Kereta	105	2	29	..	..	..	41	9	0	109	5	0	1	4	Crops have been good.
Epworth	21	0	3	..	..	..	6	15	7	..	..	..	..	..	
Patoa	6,734	1	37	582	2	0	183	15	7	769	0	0	2	..	Fifteen selectors residing on original holdings, Waitohi, Peaks Settlement.
Ashley Gorge	1,161	1	2	..	..	..	173	17	0	864	0	0	11	41	Successful.
Roimata	44	2	23	..	..	..	277	0	0	2,147	0	0	22	102	Very successful.
Braco	27	2	4	..	..	..	139	11	0	422	0	0	7	27	Settlers complain that settle- ment is too far from work.
Highbank	9,026	3	18	8	0	0	..	..	..	2,470	7	0	27	..	First year of tenancy does not expire until July.
Orakipaoa	384	0	31	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	5	..	Residence and improvements not due until July. Is likely to prove successful.

Future operations: Three estates which have recently been acquired by the Government are now in course of preparation for disposal—viz., Albury Estate, 19,340 acres 3 roods 28 perches, purchased from the Assets Realisation Board and from Mr. W. Rutherford; part of Corwar, 2,028 acres 2 roods 33 perches, purchased from J. C. Wason, Esq.; part of Horsley Down, 3,982 acres 3 roods 35 perches, purchased from Messrs. Mallock and Lance. These settlements will be offered early in the ensuing year, and will, no doubt, be followed by other blocks for which the Land Purchase Board is now in treaty.

Departmental.—During the year Mr. A. P. O'Callaghan resigned the position of Crown Lands Ranger for the South Canterbury district, and this department has thereby lost the services of a capable and energetic officer. It is satisfactory to know that, as Chief Valuer for Canterbury to the Advances to Settlers Department, his services are still retained by Government. His place as Crown Lands Ranger was filled by the appointment of Mr. W. H. Williams, from Southland. The work of the department in this district has nowise decreased during the past year; indeed, the opening-up of lands under the Land for Settlements Acts, and the consequent increase of Crown tenants under conditions involving close attention and much correspondence, tend to permanently increase the work in all its branches. The following approximate figures will in some measure illustrate the amount of work passed through the clerical branch of the office: Inward correspondence, 5,000; outward correspondence, 10,000; notices to defaulters, about 1,200; requisitions, 90; returns, 144; lithographs and pamphlets distributed, over 6,000. In addition to the above, the Receiver of Land Revenue reports as follows: Revenue collected during the year, £74,623 13s. 9d.; revenue paid into Deposit Account, £16,532 12s. 3d.; deposit receipts issued, 678; revenue receipts issued, 3,251; refund voucher forms in duplicate, 117; cheques drawn on Deposit Account, 234; cheques drawn on local bodies' deposit account, 101; notices of payment due, over 4,000. The Accountant reports that he has written upwards of 260 memoranda, dealing with 950 vouchers, representing an amount of, approximately, £280,000.

SIDNEY WEETMAN,

Commissioner of Crown Lands.