

heavy work on the Land Board and its officers, the total time occupied being fifty-three hours within five days, exclusive of the time consumed in travelling from Christchurch to Ashburton, Timaru, and Waimate, at each of which places sittings of the Board were held. At the first ballot, held on the 29th and 30th March, at Waimate, 115 of the lease-in-perpetuity allotments, all of the small grazing-runs, and thirteen township sections were allotted, and the remaining lease-in-perpetuity sections have all since been selected. The applications received were, generally speaking, made by a very good stamp of settlers, and there is every reason to anticipate that the settlement will prove an unqualified success.

Besides the foregoing there were offered for reselection during the year six small forfeited lots in the Otarakaro, Roimata, Orakipaoa, and Pareora Settlements, comprising a total area of 96 acres, and one small grazing-run of 977 acres in the Peaks and Patoa Settlements. All of these have been selected.

*General Condition of Settlements.*—The reports furnished by the Crown Lands Rangers, a few particulars from which are appended, show that, generally speaking, all of the settlements are in a very satisfactory condition, the proportion of defaulters being very small, while many of these have fulfilled in part, though not completely, the requirements of their leases. The past season has been, for nearly all of the settlements, a fruitful and prosperous one, and this has naturally helped to produce the good results recorded. The small holdings on rural settlements still furnish the principal unsatisfactory features of the reports, permanent settlement being difficult to secure on rural holdings of 30 acres downwards, while in some localities even 50 acres is too small an area. The holders of these small sections are obliged to travel far and wide to obtain employment, and though their families may remain on the section, the interests of the family and the holding must necessarily suffer from the protracted absences of the breadwinner.

Taking the settlements in the order of seniority from January, 1894, downwards, the following notes may be of interest:—

*Pareora Settlement* (near St. Andrew's).—Twenty-eight holders, of whom twenty-five are resident, while on one reselected section residence is not yet due. Improvements effected, £1,950 4s. 6d., as against £348 10s. required.

*Studholme Junction.*—Four holders, all of whom are resident and keeping their holdings well. Improvements effected, £257 18s., as against £73 4s. 6d. required.

*Kapua Settlement* (near Waimate).—Twelve holders, all of whom are complying. Improvements effected, £1,102 5s., as against £270 4s. required.

*Rosebrook Settlement* (near Timaru).—Fourteen holders, of whom twelve are in permanent residence. Improvements effected, £1,667 17s. 6d., as against £307 13s. 6d. required.

*Otaio Settlement* (near St. Andrew's).—Nine holders, all of whom have complied. Improvements effected, £842 14s. 6d., as against £216 14s. 8d. required.

*The Peaks and Patoa Settlements* (near Hurunui).—Sixteen holders, of whom four reside on their holdings and ten on other Crown leaseholds in the vicinity. Improvements effected, £1,955, as against £502 7s. 1d. required.

*Roimata Settlement* (near Christchurch).—Twenty-six holders, all fully complying. Improvements effected, £3,406, as against £553 18s. required.

*Braco Settlement* (also near Christchurch).—Fourteen holders, twelve of whom are complying. Improvements effected, £773, as against £247 18s. 2d. required.

*Kereta Settlement* (near Timaru).—Four settlers, all of whom have complied. Improvements effected, £523 5s. 6d., as against £72 18s. required.

*Epworth Settlement* (near Temuka).—Two small sections, held by a married couple, who are residing, and have improvements valued at £80, as against £6 15s. 7d. required.

*Ashley Gorge Settlement* (near Oxford).—Ten leaseholders in perpetuity and two small-grazing-run holders, of whom eleven are in permanent residence. Improvements effected, £2,405, as against £683 6s. 8d. required.

*Orakipaoa Settlement* (near Temuka).—Twenty-seven settlers, of whom thirteen have settled on their holdings, and twelve others are specially exempted by regulation from residence while they live on their own small properties in the neighbouring township. These latter effect few improvements, and consequently bring down the average, the total improvements effected being £1,363 18s., as against £678 1s. 1d. required.

*Highbank Settlement* (between Methven and Rakaia).—Seventy-two holders, of whom fifty-seven have fully complied, the defaulters being principally holders of 10-acre lots. Improvements effected, £9,323 17s., as against £3,235 14s. 1d. required. This settlement, with the neighbouring one (Marawiti) was visited in September last by a very destructive north-west gale, which did considerable damage to about 2,900 acres of newly-sown crops, the majority of the sections being more or less affected. Seeds to the value of £626, to be paid for on promissory notes extending over one, two, and three years, were distributed to settlers to assist them in resowing, but the yield of many of the crops was considerably reduced.

*Waiapi and Rakitairi Settlements* (near Temuka and Geraldine).—Thirty-six holders, of whom twenty-eight have resided and complied. The small holdings here are also unsatisfactory. Improvements effected, £4,814 10s. 1d., as against £1,463 13s. 6d. required.

*Otarakaro Settlement* (near Christchurch).—Seven holders, all complying very satisfactorily. Improvements effected, £770, as against £54 required.

*Wharenui Hamlet* (a workmen's-homes settlement, near Christchurch).—Twenty-five selectors, of whom seventeen are in permanent residence and making good homes. Improvements effected, £1,444, as against £630 required.

*Albury Settlement.*—Seventy-four holders, forty-eight of whom are in residence on their own holdings, and four others are exempt for the time being. Improvements effected, £9,226 13s. 6d., as against £3,555 4s. 11d. required.