

£1,721. The stock on the land comprises 365 head of cattle, 24 horses, 324 sheep, and 104 pigs. Ten settlers are dairying, and the total number of dairy cows is 222. All are residing, and the population in the settlement is forty-one. The success of this settlement is assured.

Aorangi is situated near Feilding. The total area is 1,753 acres, held in thirty-seven sections of from 5 to 177 acres. All sections (except one forfeited for non-compliance with the residential conditions) are occupied. The total population is 162. Thirty-five new houses have been built, some of these of superior character. 91 acres has been stumped and ploughed, and 2,208 chains of new fencing has been erected by settlers since selection. The total value of improvements done since selection is £7,036. The stock comprises 740 head of cattle, 93 horses, 763 sheep, and 193 pigs. There is a creamery built in the block, and twenty-two settlers are suppliers. The total number of dairy cows is 439. The settlers are prosperous, and express great satisfaction at having been able to secure land in such locality at reasonable rents. I consider this settlement to be most successful.

Mangawhata.—This settlement is part of what is known as Oroua Downs Estate, and is situated on the right bank of the Oroua River, a few miles above its confluence with the Manawatu. The area is 1,226 acres, cut up into seven sections; with the exception of one settler who was obliged to leave on account of ill-health, all are residing. The total population is twenty-seven. Four new houses have been built, and one settler has converted a woolshed that was on his section into a comfortable dwellinghouse. 395 chains of new fencing has been erected, and the total value of improvements made by settlers since selection is £669. The houses on the land when bought are kept in good repair, and well cared for. The stock comprises 390 head of cattle, 24 horses, 1,500 sheep, and 39 pigs. Four settlers are dairying, and milk 113 cows. I feel confident that the settlers will do well here, and that this settlement will be a success.

Epuni Hamlet is situated at the Lower Hutt, and comprises 94 acres, cut up into forty-four sections. Twenty-four settlers are residing. The total number of persons in the settlement is ninety. Twenty-seven houses have been built or are in course of erection. The total value of improvements effected by the settlers is £2,412. There is no doubt about the success of this settlement.

Native Townships.

Tokaanu.—A fair number of sections have been taken up, but few improvements made. When the sights in and near Tokaanu become better known, and better facilities are provided for tourists exploring the country around Ngauruhoe, Tongariro, &c., sections in this township will become more valuable.

Pipiriki.—Situated on the Wanganui River, and is a stopping-place for tourists going partly by river to Rotorua, and *vice versa*. Sections are much sought after in this the most successful Native township in my district. There are now two stores; the accommodation-house has been much enlarged, and is under an excellent management; several cottages have been built, and sections are being fenced in and otherwise improved. During the summer months daily steamers have been running to and from Wanganui, and the journey up is done in under eight hours. Drainage-works are being carried on, and the approaches to the steamer-landing improved.

Potaka.—Is situated on the Main Trunk Railway-line between Mangaweka and Taihape. Several new houses have been built, and other improvements, such as fencing, &c., have been done. When the railway reaches here this township will no doubt make great progress, and a considerable area of good country will drain into it.

Parata.—Situated on the Wellington-Manawatu Railway-line at Waikanae. Two houses have been built, and most of the sections have been fenced in. The general opinion is that if better train service existed between Waikanae and Wellington, this would be a most successful township.

CLERICAL BRANCH.

The correspondence during the year amounted to slightly over 55,000 letters, &c., received and despatched, being an average of about 175 per working-day. This is an increase of about 2,000 over last year's totals. The cheques drawn on imprest account numbered 350, for £2,970 1s. 5d., for wages of survey parties, &c., and 968 vouchers, representing £26,108 9s. 6d., were passed through the books.

JOHN STRAUCHON,
Commissioner of Crown Lands.