

APPENDIX II.—LAND FOR SETTLEMENTS (REPORTS OF COMMISSIONERS OF CROWN LANDS ON).

AUCKLAND.

A VERY careful examination of all the estates and workmen's hamlets has been made during the year. The progress in almost every estate has been marked; the workmen's hamlets are not all progressing so satisfactorily. In one estate, the Okauia, prospects are not very encouraging; but the inferior position which this settlement occupies only serves to heighten the success which has attended other settlements. One new estate known as "Selwyn" was offered for selection during the year. It was made available for application in two parts, the first only, comprising an area of 50,987 acres, coming into this year's operations. The detail report will show that there is every indication of a successful future for the settlers.

Opouriao Settlement.—This is one of the most successful settlements in the district. The settlers are as a rule practical farmers, most of them married men with families. Their homesteads are well established, and the settlement has a substantial appearance. The principal industry is dairying, there being a large co-operative cheese-factory and also a butter-factory. There is no doubt this settlement will be even a greater dairying centre in the future than it is now. The settlers recently celebrated in a successful manner the completion of ten years' residence, and there is no doubt that the steady progress made has been of a lasting character, and there is no need to fear for the future prosperity of the selectors. Details of the progress show that there is an area of 1,034 acres in crop, 1,728 sheep, 2,567 cattle, and 419 horses. There are 56 houses, and a total population of 279 persons, exclusive of those in Taneatua Village. The total value of improvements effected amounts to £30,423.

Okauia Settlement.—The prospects of this settlement continue to be far from encouraging. The greater part of the land is rather poor, and the settlers are engaged in stock-raising, only one being occupied in dairy-farming, the nearest creamery being four miles distant. There are 7 houses in the settlement, and the total population is 10. The live-stock consists of 560 sheep, 21 horses, and 288 cattle. At the time of inspection an area of 48 acres was in green crops. The total value of improvements is £3,069 3s.

Rangiatea Settlement.—This settlement is now nearly eight years in occupation, and is situated on the main Auckland-Thames Railway. There are two trains daily from Auckland. The settlers are hardworking industrious men, nearly all engaged in supplying milk to the creameries. There is a creamery and two butter-factories contiguous to the settlement, and the roads are in good order. This season there was a very satisfactory oat-crop harvested. At Waihou, about a mile from the settlement, will be found a store, bakery, butchery, telephone-office, hotel, and saleyards. Stock-sales are held monthly. The total population residing in the settlement is 105. Eighteen houses have been erected, and 275 acres are under crop. There are 230 sheep, 159 horses, and 754 head of cattle, and the improvements effected are valued at £9,260. Taking the settlement as a whole, everything is in good order and condition, the outlook is satisfactory, and settlers appear to be very contented.

Karapiro Settlement.—The land in this settlement is good in quality, situated as it is in the prosperous agricultural and pastoral district near Cambridge. Cattle-raising and dairying are the principal industries, and most of the settlers supply the creamery. It is an industrious community, and has effected improvements to the total value of £4,963. There are 55 persons, resident in 10 houses, and their stock consists of 70 sheep, 460 cattle, and 84 horses, and there is an area of 86 acres in crop. The settlement generally presents a satisfactory appearance.

Fencourt Settlement.—In this settlement will be found a population of 136 persons. There are 31 houses erected, and 603 acres in crop. Of horses, sheep, and cattle there are respectively 210, 170, and 1,264; and the total improvements made are worth £11,188. The settlement is situated near Cambridge, and is practically connected with Auckland by rail. There are two butter-factories adjoining the settlement and one creamery within. The district is prosperous, and embraces good agricultural and pastoral land. With few exceptions all the settlers supply the creamery or factories. The progress of drainage promises to further enhance the value of the land. Good progress has been made on this settlement notwithstanding the drawbacks regarding drainage, which fortunately now, by the formation of a Board, will soon be remedied.

Whitehall Settlement.—The land comprised in this settlement is of good quality, undulating in character. All the settlers are engaged in stock-raising. There is, however, a creamery in the vicinity. There is a good metalled road connecting with Cambridge, the settlers have comfortable homes, and there is a general appearance of prosperity. There are no sheep on the settlement, but there are 63 horses and 702 head of cattle. There is an area of 302 acres in crop, and there are 10 houses erected, occupied by 33 souls. The improvements effected represent a sum of £5,145.

Bickerstaffe Settlement.—There are now 17 houses in this settlement, accommodating a population of 81. The settlers own 49 horses, 1,248 sheep, and 940 cattle. Dairying and stock-raising occupy the attention of the people. The grass in the settlement is abundant, and the settlers appear satisfied with their selections. The roads are good and are being improved, nine men being engaged on the work. Part of the road which crosses the Wairau River is reported as impassable during winter. The settlement compares very favourably with others in the district, and inquiries are being made for the unselected sections. The total value of improvements effected by selectors on the sections now held amounts to £3,111.