

Upon a recent visit to the Te Arai and Kanakanaia Settlements, which were only established last year, I was pleasantly surprised at the wonderful progress made during so short a period. Many comfortable homesteads were in occupation, most of them well fenced, and in some cases divided into suitable paddocks. Considerable areas were under crop—oats, maize, turnips, rape, &c.—all of which were looking remarkably well.

Dairying was being carried on in some instances—a few settlers milking from twenty to thirty cows apiece; but with the present price of wool and stock most of the settlers confine their attention to sheep-farming.

There can be no question that, speaking of the Hawke's Bay district as a whole, the settlements generally are in a healthy and prosperous condition, and they afford a striking example of the success of the closer-settlement policy.

The present stringency of the money-market prevents many a good settler from taking up land, as he cannot now get advances on stock, &c., as could be done a comparatively short time ago. However, on the whole, there has been a steady advance in settlement in the district, and the right class of settlers, who, notwithstanding the fact that the outlook is not at present as bright as could be wished, are still full of energy and in good heart.

In closing this report I wish to acknowledge my indebtedness to the Rangers at Napier and Gisborne for the assistance they have rendered me in compiling the same.

HENRY TRENT.

Commissioner of Crown Lands.

TARANAKI.

The land-for-settlement estates in this district comprise the Tokaora, Clandon, Huinga, and Spotswood. The three former are all occupied, with the exception of one section, and the tenants devote themselves almost entirely to dairying, with generally successful results, and there is every indication of their continuing to do so. With regard to Spotswood, many sections still remain unselected, and there is no immediate prospect of them being taken up under anything like favourable conditions. The sections under lease are held by people who are employed on various works in the neighbourhood.

FRANCIS SIMPSON,

Commissioner of Crown Lands.

WELLINGTON.

The remarks regarding the progress of settlement upon ordinary Crown lands apply also to land-for-settlements holdings, with this marked exception, of course: that the latter comprise from the start lands all more or less improved, and that the tenure in all cases is leasehold only, without any right to purchase. I have visited all the settlements with the exception of two small ones, and I was much impressed with the progress made and the splendid stamp of settlers that I found in occupation. The whole of the settlements in the Wairarapa district are devoted to mixed farming—the higher lands for grazing purposes and the lower for dairying and agricultural purposes. In the neighbourhood of Wellington the land is used generally for fruit-growing, market-gardening, and residential purposes.

On the west coast the settlements are chiefly in the Feilding, Bulls, and Lower Oroua districts, and these are seemingly even more prosperous than the east coast—Aorangi being the most marked. These may be said to be used exclusively for dairying, cropping, and fruit-growing.

JAMES MACKENZIE,

Commissioner of Crown Lands.

NELSON.

Wangapeka Settlement.—This settlement was established on the 26th June, 1907, and contains an area of 6,263 acres, subdivided into fifteen allotments. Improvements effected during the past year show that a great deal of good and useful work has been accomplished by the tenants in felling and sowing scrub land, fencing, and ploughing. The seasons have been very favourable, rape, turnips, and oat crops being exceptionally good. On the purely pastoral portion of the settlement there has been an abundance of feed. Stock have done remarkably well, and satisfactory prices have been obtained for them. Wangapeka Settlement has been only two years in existence, yet it is in a very advanced state, the factors in its favour being a locality suitable for mixed farming and the superior quality of the settlers.

Braeburn Settlement.—This settlement was established in May, 1908. It is situated in the Mangles and Tutaki Valleys, distant eleven miles from the Township of Murchison by good dray-road, and 110 miles from the City of Nelson, fifty-four miles of the distance being by road and the remainder by the main coach-road Nelson to Westport. The area of Braeburn Settlement is 18,063 acres, 2,500 acres of which is good flat agricultural land formerly comprised in the Braeburn Estate, the remaining portion being undulating to hilly land, covered with bush, well adapted for pastoral purposes when cleared. Of the twenty-one farms into which the property is divided, twelve are occupied, the annual rental being £781. The prospects of this settlement are very good,