

an average of £2 3s. per acre, whereas the present unimproved value of the whole is assessed at £26,812, being an average of £5 8s. per acre. The original unimproved values ranged from 5s. to £4 2s. 6d. per acre, but the range in value at present is from £1 to £10 per acre. It is, however, worthy of note, as illustrating the *bona fides* of the tenants, that, notwithstanding the increases in values, very few transfers have taken place. The tenants without exception are very well satisfied with their holdings, and are farming them to good advantage. Improvements of a total value of £16,547 have been effected. Both of the settlements are being utilized largely for dairying purposes, and are carrying 1,420 head of cattle and 1,559 sheep, and supporting a population of upwards of a hundred persons.

H. D. M. HASZARD,
Commissioner of Crown Lands.

CANTERBURY.

LAND OPENED FOR SELECTION.

Fourteen new settlements were opened for selection under renewable-lease tenure during the year as follows: Timaunga, nineteen sections, all disposed of; Four Peaks, eight sections, all disposed of; Avenel, seventeen sections, all disposed of; Valverde, eleven sections, all disposed of; Winchester, ten sections, all disposed of; Aylesbury, six sections, all disposed of; Waimate, thirty-five sections, thirty-three disposed of; Bournedale, seven sections, six disposed of; Claremont, eleven sections, all disposed of; Timaunga Extension, seven sections, two disposed of; Avenel Extension, nine sections, eight disposed of; Mount Nessing, eleven sections, all disposed of; Ashwick, eight sections, all disposed of; Strathmore, three sections, all disposed of. And the following were reopened: Scargill, one section, and Valverde, one section, both of which were disposed of.

In the case of the Waimate Settlement, all the sections but two have been disposed of, and these will probably be taken up at any time. The five unselected sections in Timaunga Extension Settlement will be regrouped and offered shortly, when there is every indication that they will be selected.

The competition was keen for the pastoral areas, as many as eighty-seven preference applicants going to ballot for some of the sections. The agricultural sections did not receive such favour, partly owing to the scarcity of labour and partly to the smallness of some of the sections. In two settlements the sections offered were not all selected at time of ballot, but are now being gradually taken up, some of the unselected sections being absorbed by the adjoining holders, and the balance grouped and are to be offered in larger holdings.

GENERAL.

Of the ninety-one settlements now established in this land district, it may be said that, as a whole, they are fairly prosperous, some more so than others. They comprise an area of 488,456 acres, occupied by 1,677 tenants representing 5,522 souls. The Rangers' reports of the new settlements opened this year are not yet due, but there is evidence that the majority are well satisfied, and needful improvements are being effected.

C. R. POLLEN,
Commissioner of Crown Lands.

OTAGO.

The settlers holding land under Land for Settlements Acts in Otago have had a fairly successful year, although the weather has not been all that could be desired. On the 13th February a violent storm came up from the south-west, followed by hail and rain. The hail did an immense amount of damage to the crops, especially in North Otago. In some parts the wheat and oat crops suffered severely. The rape was in many instances completely destroyed.

The weather was dry up till January. After that a good deal of rain fell. The dry hot winds in December prematurely ripened the wheat crops. The yield, in consequence, is light, and will probably average not more than half of what it was last year. The root crop in North Otago is very poor—in many cases a complete failure. In the south the roots are much better, and will be a great help in carrying the sheep over the winter. The grass generally throughout the country is good, and to that fact is due the healthy condition of the dairying industry. The creameries distributed throughout Otago are proving a great source of profit to the small farmers, and many of these are getting into quite an independent position. Those settlers on the large areas do not intend in the future to go in for grain-growing to any great extent, on account of the difficulty of securing labour. Most of the settlers are fast getting their land down in grass, and will go in for fat lambs for freezing. The price for lambs opened this year at 18s. but came back to 17s., at which price farmers are doing well. Taken on the whole, our settlers are in a very good position, in spite of the unfavourable weather-conditions and the scarcity of labour.