

The small settlements near Hastings have had a good season, dairying and fruit-culture being the principal sources of profit.

The Tongoio Settlement is still in trouble with the blackberry. The settlers refuse to accept the concession offered by the Government, and prefer trying to obtain revaluation under section 13 of the Land Laws Amendment Act, 1913. All but three settlers have applied accordingly. This is probably the best solution of the difficulty for the Crown.

The other settlements are in a very satisfactory condition, and the settlers are becoming more prosperous every year.

In the northern part of the district, around Poverty Bay, the settlers have had another very successful year. The improvements on the land exceed the requirements of the Act to the value of £74,023. There are very few defaulters for either residence or improvements, and then not to a serious extent.

On some of the large holdings of the high-priced land it is impossible to comply with the conditions without incurring extravagant expenditure on buildings, and consequently these have not been shown as defaulters.

The past season has been unusually dry, and has been rather bad for the settlers who go in for dairying, more, however, from the shortage of water than from scarcity of feed.

The season, taken all over, has been good for cropping, and the grass-crops have been very satisfactory. Oats and barley have done remarkably well, although some of the spring oats were a little light. As regards fruit, there has been a profitable yield of apples and pears, but a scarcity of stone fruits.

The Gisborne-Napier Railway is being steadily pushed ahead, and the settlers expect the road to be laid to the Ngatapa Settlement by the end of the month.

The settlers, on the whole, are in a prosperous and flourishing condition.

W. H. SKINNER,
Commissioner of Crown Lands.

TARANAKI.

There are only five settlements in this district, and, generally speaking, the settlers on them are doing fairly well. The most prosperous is the Tokaora, and two of the holdings have been made freehold.

A few of the selections on some of the other settlements would be all the better if there were some more flat land for cropping.

In the case of Spotswood, near New Plymouth, very little is now left on our hands.

In the Tariki Settlement—the latest one—the settlers seem satisfied, and the general opinion is that the land was secured at a reasonable price. The settlers are getting the land into good working-order. One section was thrown up, but will be readily selected when it is again offered.

G. H. BULLARD,
Commissioner of Crown Lands.

WELLINGTON.

Two new settlements were purchased and disposed of during the year—viz., Poroporo, of 9,391 acres, and Heatherlea, of 598 acres. Both were readily taken up, and it is evident there is a steady demand for improved farms let under this system.

There seems to be no demand for the numerous small sections which are open for selection in the settlements subdivided for residential purposes near Wellington and the Hutt. On the other hand, the rural settlements are all very prosperous, and the settlers have done well on them; in fact, many are in a very sound financial position.

T. N. BRODRICK,
Commissioner of Crown Lands.

NELSON.

There are only two settlements in this district—Wangapeka and Braeburn. The former is in a very flourishing condition. The settlers are well satisfied with their holdings, and have good homesteads, well-cultivated lands, and improvements some three times in excess of the requirements. The population is about fifty souls.

In Braeburn Settlement satisfactory improvements have been made, and the settlers are doing well. The chief industry is dairying, but improvements are being made with root and grain crops. The settlers appear to be well satisfied with their holdings. The population is seventy-four souls.

F. A. THOMPSON,
Commissioner of Crown Lands.