

NELSON.

(F. A. THOMPSON, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

In this district there are three estates which have been opened under the Land for Settlements Act—namely, the Wangapeka, Braeburn, and Lake Settlements.

In the Wangapeka and Braeburn Settlements some of the tenants engage in pastoral pursuits, but where cropping has been undertaken good results have been obtained, and in both these settlements the dairying industry is in a very flourishing condition. The lessees have nearly all complied with requirements, and have erected up-to-date buildings, fencing, &c. These settlements are now well established, and the settlers look forward to the future with satisfaction.

In the Lake Settlement only one section is occupied, and the holder of it is on active service. In these circumstances the settlement is at present making no progress.

MARLBOROUGH.

(H. G. PRICE, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

There are thirteen settlements in this district, containing 213,114 acres, held by 457 lessees, but, with the exception of Hillersden, Lynton Downs, and Wither, they are all old-established ones. The drought that has been experienced during the last two years has been a serious handicap to the more recently acquired estates, and also, but in a lesser degree, to the other settlements, more especially those in the southern part of the district; but in spite of the drought most of the settlers, with the exception of those on Lynton Downs, have had a fairly good year owing to the higher prices obtained for wool and produce.

The Rainford Settlement, near Kaikoura, is about the only one where dairying is carried on; the others are more suitable for agricultural and pastoral farming.

The crops, especially those in the northern portion of the district, have been better than in the preceding year, and lucerne-growing is extending, the settlers recognizing that this is one of the most useful and profitable crops they can grow.

Generally speaking, the settlers are satisfied, and with the return of normal weather-conditions their prospects will improve.

WESTLAND.

(W. F. MARSH, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

The whole of the settlers on both of the settlements (*i.e.*, Kokatahi and Poerua) are well satisfied with their holdings, and none of the properties have changed hands during the year. Progress in these settlements has been very marked, and large goodwills are now offering; but these fail to tempt the lessees to part with their homes. Both of the settlements are occupied as dairy farms.

CANTERBURY.

(C. R. POLLEN, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

NORTH CANTERBURY.

Out of thirty-seven settlements in North Canterbury, twelve have become thoroughly and prosperously established, the tenants' interests exceeding those of the Crown. Twelve more are nearly so, seven have fair prospects, but the balance are not in too satisfactory a position.

The season has not been good for cereal crops, wheat and oats in some cases being frosted, and the dry winter and spring prevented the usual growth of both the crops and grass.

Farmers had to stock lightly, but luckily the high values obtaining for wool, mutton, cheese, butter, and oaten chaff made up partly for the deficiency in quantity. Wheat did not prove a paying crop generally. The rains in the autumn and the mild winter gave a good start to the root and rape crops, but the diamond moth appeared and ravaged a considerable area. The pastures have now freshened up and promise a good growth of grass for the coming winter.

SOUTH CANTERBURY.

Last year the settlers in South Canterbury experienced a most trying season, and only the exceptional price of sheep and cereals, the result of the war, saved them from serious financial trouble. I have now to report that this season has been even worse than the past one. The price of stock has been maintained, but the prices of cereals hardly pays for the labour involved in production. Fortunately the older settlements, on account of their prosperity, can stand the present strain, but the new settlements are suffering considerably.