

APPENDIX.

REPORTS OF COMMISSIONERS OF CROWN LANDS.

AUCKLAND.

(H. M. SKEET, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

THE new settlements offered during the year were—

Pakaraka Settlement, situated between Kawakawa and Kaikohe : Opened July, 1918. Area offered, 1,463 acres, in seventeen sections, from 48 to 147 acres ; ten sections, comprising 751 acres, were selected. The applicants were of a good type, and got to work on their sections quickly, milk being supplied to the factory in about two months, although the dry summer and autumn seriously affected their subsequent progress.

Waiteitei Settlement, near Wellsford : Opened October, 1918. Area offered, 1,730 acres, in ten sections, from 138 to 223 acres ; eight sections, comprising 1,376 acres, were selected. Good progress has been made.

Mangateparu Settlement, near Morrinsville : Opened March, 1919. Area offered, 3,390 acres, in forty-three sections, from 10 to 122 acres, the whole of which were selected. Most of the settlers made an early start with fencing, buildings, &c., and at the time of writing very satisfactory progress is being made. An area of 830 acres was withheld from disposal at the first ballot to provide for stock purchased in advance for distribution to the settlers, and this area will be offered at a later date.

In addition to the foregoing, four blocks were purchased under section 3 of the Discharged Soldiers Settlement Amendment Act, 1917, for allotment without ballot to the soldiers who had applied for them. The total area was 610 acres, which provided for eight settlers.

The other lands offered during the year included a block of 1,169 acres, in twenty sections, situated in the vicinity of Taumarunui—formerly bush land from which the milling-timber had been removed ; 516 acres, in seven sections, adjacent to the Matamata Settlement, consisting of good land which will be easily brought in for dairying ; and ten other sections, comprising 1,891 acres, in various localities.

With the exception of some of the purchased estates, there has been comparatively little demand for lands offered, and the inquiries received are directed mainly to improved or partly improved lands from which an early return may be assured. There is little evidence of any demand for lands requiring to be broken in from an absolutely unimproved condition, and there are indications that in the minds of many discharged soldiers the desire to take up land is closely associated with the idea of selling out at a substantial profit at the earliest possible date.

Condition of Established Settlements.—Reynolds Settlement, near Cambridge, established June, 1916 : Settled partly by discharged soldiers and partly by civilians. Good progress being made, the block being dairying-land, well situated near town and factory ; most of the settlers have good homes and outbuildings, and milking-machines installed by private arrangement. A few sections at the back of the settlement, comprising peat lands, were found to be insufficiently developed for separate holdings, and sections were provided elsewhere for the lessees, who are now doing well.

Pakarau Settlement, between Morrinsville and Matamata, established December, 1916. All discharged soldiers. Notwithstanding a good deal of adverse criticism of this settlement, the lessees, who are all dairying, now appear to be doing well and working their holdings satisfactorily, and the settlement gives every indication of success.

Taniwha Settlement, near Waerenga, established December, 1916 : All but two sections are held by discharged soldiers. Good dairying-land. Lessees working well and developing their holdings successfully.

Streamlands Settlement, near Warkworth, established June, 1917 : All discharged soldiers. Progress in this settlement not so marked as in others, the land needing more development before the holdings can be worked at a profit. Good progress on the whole is being made.

Tapapa Settlement, near Hinuera, established June, 1917 : All discharged soldiers, who are working well, improving their holdings, and appear to be well on the way to success.

Te Miro Settlement, near Cambridge, established February, 1918 : All discharged soldiers. This block needs a good deal of hard work by experienced men to ensure success, but when the settlers supply the labour and obtain more experience in dealing with this class of land there should be no doubt of their success. On the whole, satisfactory progress is being made.

In regard to the more scattered holdings, the information received from the Rangers indicates that generally satisfactory progress is being made, and in the majority of cases there is every prospect of success. There will, of course, for some time be a proportion of failures, due in some cases to the fact that health impaired on active service will not permit of hard work on a farm ; in others to unsuitability for farm-life ; and in some cases to lack of experience and unwillingness to settle down to steady work. I have already urged, and still consider, that every block might advantageously contain a proportion of experienced civilian farmers, whose example and experience would be of assistance to the soldier settlers, though it may be admitted that in many cases the latter show a