

their pastures. The Pakarau Settlement, also near Morrinsville, has made rapid improvement and there is already a substantial goodwill value in all the holdings. The Tapapa Settlement, near Hinuera, in the Upper Waikato, and Taniwha Settlement, near Te Kauwhata, are developing into successful, well-established settlements. The Te Miro Settlement, near Cambridge, has not yet surmounted its initial difficulties, but the majority of the settlers are working well, and should before long have laid substantial foundations of success. A somewhat larger proportion than usual of the selectors in this settlement lacked the elements of success, which could not be easily attained, but these are gradually relinquishing their places to others with better prospects. Of the new settlements established during the year the Hukutaia Settlement, near Opotiki, which was offered in July, 1919, has made excellent progress; many of the settlers commenced dairying last season, and others, are ready to do so next season; substantial improvements have been effected, and good crops of winter feed are assured. The Matuku and Waiare Settlements, near Thornton and Te Puke, have not made such good progress, but their prospects are satisfactory, though a supplementary water-supply will have to be provided for the latter. The settlers in the Minden Block and Ohauiti Settlement, near Tauranga, are doing good work on their holdings, which are of poorer quality and will take longer for productive development. The Apata Settlement, also near Tauranga, has experienced difficulties owing to the withdrawal of some of the original applicants, who have not yet been successfully replaced. The Horahora Settlement, near Cambridge, was established under section 3 of the Act about the middle of last year, and is making good progress. The Tahaia Settlement, near Otorohanga, has recently been established also under section 3; the property is a good one, and should prove successful. The Puahue Settlement, near Te Awamutu, the largest of the new settlements, has only been established a short time, but a good start has been made, and the new settlers are receiving much kindly assistance from the former owner, Mr. W. G. Park, who retains an adjoining portion of his property. The smaller settlements in the Waikato are generally making satisfactory progress. Recently established settlers have been considerably hampered by the difficulty of obtaining supplies of timber for building purposes, while corrugated iron and fencing-wire are also in short supply and costly. The settlers at Mahoeuui and near Taumarunui are making good progress with the development of their holdings. The individual settlers who are scattered throughout all parts of the district are generally doing good work on their holdings, and paving the way to success and independence.

The total amount of advances paid out to or on account of settlers for stock or improvements during the year was £128,521 3s. 4d.

Lands to be offered for Selection.—As indicated in my general report, a very large area of Crown land situated in various parts of the district and adapted for different branches of farming is nearly ready to be placed on the market, so as to give suitable opportunities for all classes of soldier settlers.

General.—In my other report I have referred to the strenuous work performed by the ranging and office staffs; the Rangers have been travelling the whole year without intermission, and they and the Supervisor, who was appointed last year, have rendered much valuable and willing assistance to the soldier settlers.

HAWKE'S BAY.

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

The five settlements held by discharged soldiers, being fairly recent purchases, are still passing through the storm and stress period associated with the first two years' occupation and the general unsettlement resulting from post-war conditions. The future of Watea Settlement is still a little uncertain, but a proposal is now under consideration which it is hoped will place the settlement on a better footing.

The appointment during the year of a Supervisor whose whole time is devoted to the interests of soldier settlements has facilitated this special work, and resulted in bringing the men into closer touch with the office. The personal attention of that officer has saved much correspondence and delays, otherwise unavoidable, in the matter of the supply of stock and the payment of advances, &c.

A total area of 37,040 acres was made available during the year, solely for soldier settlement, and every section but one was taken up.

The operations under the Discharged Soldiers Settlement Amendment Act, 1917, in granting assistance to purchase, or to discharge mortgages on properties, have resulted in a very large volume of business being done under that heading. The tables already submitted give details of completed transactions, most of which, I am pleased to say, have been carried through with expedition and satisfaction, considering the frequent conflict between vendors' prices and the valuations obtained by the Land Board. In order to cope with the special work during the year the Land Board has been compelled to hold more frequent and longer meetings, entailing great demands on the time and attention of its members, all of whom are busy men themselves, but who have given ungrudgingly of their best to promote the interests of the Crown and the settlers alike. I am pleased to have this opportunity of recording my appreciation of their valued services during the past strenuous year.

TARANAKI.

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

DURING the year only one estate, the Kota Settlement, has been opened for selection. Some of the selectors are already doing well, but those on the back portion are somewhat hampered by the non-completion of the internal road and a bridge, caused by the scarcity of labour. The cost of road-formations and similar work has increased very much of late, and this, added to the high prices ruling for land, makes it difficult to settle soldiers at satisfactory prices on estates bought for subdivision.