

AUCKLAND.

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

The only new estates purchased during the year have been dealt with under the Discharged Soldiers Settlement Act, and will be referred to in that report.

The old-established settlements have, on the whole, experienced a year of great prosperity, nearly all of them being engaged principally in dairying, with excellent returns. In a number of the settlements, especially Matamata and Selwyn, a fair amount of subdivision has taken place, and holdings in these settlements have changed hands at high prices.

HAWKE'S BAY.

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

The three following new settlements opened during the year were offered for discharged soldiers only, and are referred to under that heading: Corby Settlement, 911 acres; Te Kura Settlement, 1,136 acres; Beattie Settlement, 3,863 acres.

There are now thirty-six settlements established in this district, and of these five settlements are held by discharged soldiers. Reference to the general condition of most of the old-established settlements (thirty-one in number) is hardly necessary, as the majority have long since overcome their initial difficulties, and as a result of the high prices that have ruled for some time past are doing well.

TARANAKI.

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

The old-established settlements are all doing well, and holders could get large goodwills for their interests.

WELLINGTON.

(G. H. M. McCLURE, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

Eight estates were acquired for the purpose of discharged-soldier settlement, and those disposed of comprise the following, viz.: Pihautea, 27 sections, 1,946 acres; Cloverlea, 18 sections, 284 acres; Taumaihi, 4 sections, 18 acres; Oturoa, 7 sections, 728 acres; Kairanga, 12 sections, 384 acres; Eaglesham, 6 sections, 1,383 acres.

The other estates acquired which have not yet been offered are—Akitio, 6 sections, 3,523 acres; and Tuturumuri, 11 sections, 6,162 acres: these will be offered in May.

All the estates acquired in former years are in a satisfactory condition.

MARLBOROUGH.

(H. J. LOWE, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

No new estates have been opened for settlement during the year, but the existing ones have been sharing very materially in the general prosperity of the district, as evidenced by the keen desire to transfer at very substantial goodwills, no doubt encouraged by soldier settlement. The total number of settlements at the end of the year was fifteen, comprising 219,441 acres, and occupied by 474 lessees, paying a rental of £33,147 7s. 11d. per annum. The settlers are continuing to succeed with lucerne, which bids fair to revolutionize the value of some of the poorer lands.

The prices realized for stock, wool, and dairy-produce were good. Four new settlements are being got ready for ballot early in the coming year, and others are being procured by the new local Land Purchase Board.

NELSON.

(H. D. McKELLAR, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

In addition to the six settlements previously thrown open for selection in this district—namely, Wangapeka, Braeburn, Lake, Walker, Palmer, and Spittal—the Golden Downs Estate was acquired and submitted to public competition during the year. It was set apart solely for discharged soldiers, in three lots, each of which was selected.

The settlers on Braeburn and Wangapeka, established years ago, are doing very well. The other settlements, more recently disposed of, are being developed in a satisfactory manner, excepting Spittal, and excluding Golden Downs Settlement, which was only dealt with in March last.

The whole of the land so far acquired for settlement is pastoral country, principally suitable for grazing, but in part for dairying and cropping purposes.