

With the more recent settlements the position is somewhat different, as the settlers were faced with difficulties which the earlier settlers did not have to contend with. These newer settlements are for the most part occupied by discharged soldiers, who, generally speaking, are now in a fair way to making good as a result of adjustments in capital value and other concessions which have been made, and, given another good season or two, quite a number of settlers whose chances of success at at one time appeared doubtful will have a reasonable chance of retrieving their position and ultimately making a success of their venture.

GISBORNE.

(E. H. FARNIE, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

No new properties were purchased during the year. The old-established settlements continue to flourish, and most of the settlers are doing very well. Round about Gisborne the recent great reductions in taxation values have placed settlers on a sounder footing, and the very good season experienced locally has also helped to increase returns. The Te Wera Settlement has been successfully farmed by the Department pending felling of large areas of bush, road-construction, &c.

HAWKE'S BAY.

(J. D. THOMSON, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

The settlements in this district, inclusive of estates acquired under the Discharged Soldiers Settlement Act, now number thirty-five.

During the year four estates were offered to the Department, but for various reasons were not acquired.

Favourable climatic conditions, heavy lambing percentage, increased weight in wool, and good prices for cattle, fat lambs, and wool have given the pastoralist one of the most satisfactory seasons possible. The dairy-farmer, and orchardist also (though in a lesser degree), have also experienced a remarkably good season.

The whole of the civilian settlements in this district have been established for a number of years, and all the settlers, with possibly a few exceptions, are now in a sound position.

TARANAKI.

(W. D. ARMIT, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

Portions of Karu and Marco Settlements have been revalued this year, and substantial concessions arranged. The older dairying settlements are well established, but in many of the others there is a continual need for energy and pasture-management to control secondary growth and fern. The heavy rates on some of the settlements have been forcibly brought under notice this year through applications by County Councils for redress for non-payment of rates, but satisfactory arrangements have been made without any drastic action by the Land Board. In some cases the rates constitute a rent on the land, and it is impossible to ignore this matter in fixing present-day rentals. The ragwort nuisance on Croydon is still evident, and is a serious handicap to any one attempting dairying on some of the subdivisions. The land cannot be farmed with sheep to pay its way, and temporary remissions are necessary, while catch-crops are being utilized precedent to sowing down in permanent grasses.

Vacant areas on Piu and Tawhiwhi Settlements will again be offered in the near future, with rental-remission periods subject to improvements being carried out.

A total of 1,310 acres of settlement land has been offered this year, comprising seventeen selections, and 50 acres, comprising seven selections, have been taken up. No new areas have been acquired under the provisions of the Land for Settlements Act.

WELLINGTON.

(H. W. C. MACKINTOSH, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

There were no new estates purchased during the year under the Land for Settlements Act. The number of estates purchased under this Act in the Wellington District, including those acquired for the repatriation of discharged soldiers, is 130.

The settlers on the older settlements, on which, for the most part, sheep and cattle are carried, are now well established as successful farmers. The later-purchased estates were mainly acquired for returned soldiers, and these are in some cases not yet established successfully.

The last estate acquired was the Tupurupuru Estate, in 1926. This was part of the late Sir Walter Buchanan's property. The settlers on this settlement are sheep-farming, and go in for raising black-faced lambs. The success of the settlement is assured.

The revenue received from settlement lands by way of rents and other payments was £83,113, an increase of £2,803 over last year's receipts.

NELSON.

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

No new areas have been acquired during the past year.

Blue Glen Settlement.—Portion of this settlement has been taken over by the Forestry Department in connection with the Upper Motueka afforestation project.

Matakitaki and Tutaki Settlements.—These areas were reported on by the Deteriorated Lands Committee, and a proposal is now under consideration to make one holding of each settlement, as it is found that the country is more suitable for sheep-farming than dairying.

A number of other settlements in the Nelson District have been revalued under the Deteriorated Lands Act, 1925, and the concessions granted should enable the settlers to make a success of their holdings.