

Hukutaia Settlement, Opotiki, had a splendid spring and early summer. The majority of the settlers had larger butterfat returns this season than last. The prices of butterfat are also expected to be a shade higher.

The settlements on the Poverty Bay flats—Repongaere, Glencoe, and Homebush—commenced the season under favourable conditions, the stock having wintered very well. The semi-drought in January and February, of course, affected the returns, but the warm rains followed by warm sunshine have since increased the return enormously.

As far as the Wairoa settlements are concerned—Ardkeen, Ohuka, Putere, and Te Reinga—the season has been a really good one, and most of the settlers have done well. These settlements are sheep-farming propositions. Wool-prices opened well and continued good all through the season; the lambing percentage and percentage of fat lambs were also good, and the prices for surplus stock were high. There is still an abundance of feed everywhere, and a good start for next season is assured.

Speaking generally, all the soldier settlements and settlers are now in a very favourable position. There are one or two men who may have to be helped further, but the rest should have no difficulty in making good.

#### HAWKE'S BAY.

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

The effects of the improved position of the soldier settlers through the relief afforded by the determinations and recommendations of the Dominion Revaluation Board have been shown in a very marked degree during the year just ended.

Dairy cows went into the winter in splendid order, and under unusually fine weather conditions throughout the winter were able to put up a butterfat record during the milking season as, with but a slight setback during January and part of February, the growth of feed was phenomenal.

The season, in every respect, has been a particularly satisfactory one for the sheep-farmer. There has been a marked falling-off in losses from the various causes which, in one form or another, have in the past taken heavy toll; while the lambing percentage has been 15 per cent. higher.

The orchardist has also had a remarkably good season. An ample rainfall, almost total absence of high winds, no disastrous hailstorm such as has been experienced in other seasons, and good prices in the local and Home markets have combined to make the orchard a financial success. A cherry-orchard of 5 acres stands to net the fortunate owner no less than £600, and on apple-orchards of 7 acres the returns this year will average £700. It is anticipated that fully 170,000 cases of apples will be exported this season—about double the number exported last season.

The spell of dry weather during January and February was most opportune so far as the agriculturist was affected, enabling him to harvest successfully heavy crops of oats, lucerne, clover, and meadow-hay, while a considerable amount of excellent *Danthonia* seed was harvested by means of the stripper. All root crops, with the exception of potatoes, have been unusually heavy, and escaped the ravages of the general summer pests. The prospects for the coming season are distinctly bright.

During the year ten farms were abandoned or forfeited; of these, six have been disposed of, and it is anticipated that the remainder will be readily taken up when put on the market.

#### TARANAKI.

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

The past season has been a very satisfactory one for the grazier soldier settler. A uniform high level of wool-prices at the various sales this year has been a very encouraging factor. An immense amount of good has been derived from the exceptionally dry season in the grazing districts inland, where considerable areas of fern and second growth have been cleaned up and resown.

Sheep-prices of all description have reached a high level, and a considerable movement of stock, replacing sales of fats, was seen this month. Dry-sheep returns have been quite satisfactory to the settler farming difficult country unsuitable for breeding, while store-lamb prices have reached a higher figure than has been experienced for several years.

The dairyman has not benefited to the same degree. A very satisfactory spring has been followed by the dry season, which in some cases led to an acute shortage of water, as well as lack of pasture-growth. The worst-affected portion of the district comprised the area from Uruti following the coastal belt to Opunake, where rains were a month to six weeks later in arriving than in the other portions of this land district. With the remarkable recuperative power of Taranaki pastures the seasonal results cannot yet be seen, although many soldier settlers' herds have commenced to dry off much earlier than usual, and one milking per day has already been resorted to. The prospects for winter in these cases are not bright.

It is satisfactory to see an increasing percentage of the soldier settlers arriving at a financial point where a sound equity is disclosed in the securities. There are, however, unfortunately a considerable number who do not appear to make any appreciable improvement, and the ultimate result of success or failure is not yet evident.

The benefits derived from the Deteriorated Lands Act are beginning to show. Supervision is given to each case, and the soldier settler, in common with the Crown tenant, appears to be appreciative of the benefits offered by way of remission of rental or interest provided stipulated improvements are carried out. The small margin of profit over charges in many cases does not permit of rapid progress, however.