

A large number of properties have of late been offered in this district for closer settlement, but in many cases the land has been unsuitable for this purpose, while invariably the vendor's idea of value is so much in excess of Government valuations, and also those of departmental officers, that so far no business has resulted.

A number of inquiries are being made under Part II of the Land Laws Amendment Act, 1928, by persons who desire the Crown to acquire private lands on their behalf and subsequently lease same to them, but so far no transactions under this legislation have been completed in this district.

GISBORNE.

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

No new properties were purchased during the year, although several were offered: the prices asked were considered too high. The old-established settlements are still doing very well.

Revaluations in various counties have put the settlers on a sounder footing, and the very good season experienced has also helped considerably.

The Te Wera Settlement is still being farmed by the Department, and is giving satisfactory results.

HAWKE'S BAY.

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

No new settlements have been purchased during the year, and the number of settlements, inclusive of those under the Discharged Soldiers Settlement Act, is thirty-five. Two estates were offered to the Department during the year but were not purchased. There are several more under offer, and these are at present under consideration.

The settlers have experienced another very favourable season, the weather being propitious and prices were well maintained—in fact, prices of fat lambs on some settlements were exceptionally high. The dairy-farmer has had a splendid season. The majority of the settlers are well established, but isolated cases still occur where, owing to unforeseen circumstances, a lessee is not doing too well. These cases are few, and should not increase. There were a few cases of transfer in the older-established settlements during the year.

TARANAKI.

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

Several properties have been offered during the year, but for various reasons none of the offers have been accepted.

The older-established settlements continue successful, and a number of the later-acquired properties are becoming firmly established, notably Araheke, Karikara, Kohura, Kota, Parkes, Tututawa, and Tawhiwhi (with exception of one settler).

On Karu and portions of Croydon ragwort is a serious problem, but the matter is receiving attention and the settlers given every assistance and encouragement.

A good farming season has been experienced, and most of the settlements are making excellent headway.

WELLINGTON.

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

The estates which were acquired before the war are firmly established, and, with one or two exceptions, their success is assured. Many of the settlers have acquired the freehold of their sections. Those estates purchased after 1914 were acquired mainly for discharged soldiers, and while some are in a prosperous condition others are not yet so fortunate. Each case is, however, brought under review, and it is hoped that ultimately all the holdings will carry contented settlers.

No new estates were purchased during the year, although at the time of writing negotiations for the purchase of Mr. R. L. Levin's Westella Estate at Feilding are practically completed. This land comprises some of the best dairying-land in the district, and there are already indications that there will be record application for it.

In November last the Mataikona Settlement was thrown open for selection, and the six subdivisions were readily taken up by a good class of settlers, who seemed pleased with their prospects.

NELSON.

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

The concessions and revaluations under the Deteriorated Lands Act have placed the lessees of settlement lands on a satisfactory footing. The majority of lessees appear to be doing their best to improve their holdings by liming and top-dressing.

Matakitaki and Tutaki Settlements have been reallocated as individual holdings, as it is found that the country is more suitable for sheep-farming than dairying.

No new areas have been acquired during the past year. Several properties have been offered to the Department, but a preliminary inspection has shown that they have not been suitable for subdivision into dairy-farms.