

## GISBORNE.

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

On account of the very favourable season the majority of soldier settlers in this district have done well. Forfeiture was found to be necessary in one or two cases, and will probably be necessary in a few more.

The Poverty Bay Settlements—Repongaere, Homebush, and Glencoe—being dairying propositions, had a very favourable season, the increased production averaging about 20 per cent. During January and February a long spell of dry weather reduced this average, and there was practically little rainfall until the end of the year. The prospects of these settlements for the coming season are good, but as they are subject to flood after heavy rain, prospects depend greatly on the weather conditions.

In the Wairoa part of the district, Ardkeen, Ohuka, and Clydebank Settlements, and Putere Block, the season was exceptionally good. There was plenty of feed, and the wool was in superior condition. The prices obtained were high. Stock-prices remained firm. Generally speaking, soldier settlers in this part of the district had a splendid year, and their prospects for next season appear to be good. Two or three holdings at Ardkeen forfeited last year have not yet been reallotted pending a revaluation of the settlement. The final revaluation of Ohuka Settlement is also being undertaken.

East Coast—Paremata and Wharekaka Settlements: These settlements are dairying propositions. The season opened favourably, but owing to the dry spell in the last three months of the year the supply of cream was affected. I am glad to report that most of the settlers went in for top-dressing, with the result that there was not a shortage of feed. Prices realized for butterfat was the best for some years.

Bay of Plenty—Hukutaia Settlement: This settlement had a much longer dairying season than usual, and one of the most successful experienced. Prices for butterfat were good, and those farmers who carried sheep experienced a most favourable season, with a good lambing percentage and a satisfactory price for wool.

## HAWKE'S BAY.

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

With few exceptions the soldier settlers in this district have done well in the past year; and now that, in most cases, owing to liberal concessions granted by the Dominion Board, settlers are holding their lands at a reasonable rate, there is no reason why they should not be successful. The few exceptions are those whose cases are still under review, or where the settler himself lacks the experience, energy, or capacity to make a successful farmer. These cases are all receiving special attention, and where a man is doing his level best to succeed every allowance possible is made.

From a productive point of view a very favourable year for the farmers has been experienced. Looking back over the last two years, I cannot remember any two consecutive years having such similar weather conditions, especially through the summer season—and the advantage, if any, was in favour of the year just ended. The winter was mild, with ample feed for stock. The frosts were not heavy, and pasture continued to grow well into May. From then there were intermittent periods of frost, wet and fine weather. For a short period during the spring, strong westerly winds ruled, with a hint of a dry summer. This, however, gave way to good weather, with a well-distributed rainfall up to the first week in January. From then to the end of February hot weather with very little rain was experienced, and there were grass-fires at Takapau and other parts. Normal rain fell in March and quickly restored the pastures.

Stock has done remarkably well, although a few isolated cases of heavy losses among hoggets during the wet in winter, and liver-fluke among breeding-ewes, have occurred, whilst among the dairy-farmers cases of sterility with cows are reported, not, however, to any alarming extent. This trouble will always occur on farms unless a lot of care and attention is given to the cows at the proper time, and I feel sure the remedy is in the settler's own hands, assisted as he is by the capable officers of the Veterinary Division of the Department of Agriculture. Feed has been so abundant that complaints have been made that the pasture could not be kept in proper order. The grass became so long that the sheep's feet suffered with scald, which turned into footrot through the long grass getting between the cloven feet. Some farmers have turned the surplus of feed to account by making hay, and some very heavy crops have been harvested.

The prices realized for fat stock have been high; in particular, fat lambs have fetched higher prices than last year. Wool was a little lower than last season, but the average price was quite a good one. Butterfat should average about 1s. 6d. per pound. There has been a substantial increase in the output of butter for the year—probably 20 per cent.

The orchardist's season was marred by an exceedingly heavy hailstorm early in December, which did tremendous damage to orchards which unfortunately were in the path of the storm. Some orchards were completely stripped of fruit, and in those cases where the damage was not so serious the fruit was so marked as to render it unfit for export, and the growers would have to take what they could get in the local market. It is estimated that at least forty thousand cases of apples and pears were lost to the export trade.

A splendid season for tomatoes was experienced, although some growers were affected by the hailstorm. This did not appreciably affect the output, which was so heavy as to glut the market at the height of the season.