

EXTRACTS FROM REPORTS OF COMMISSIONERS OF CROWN LANDS.

NORTH AUCKLAND

(O. N. CAMPBELL, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

Owing to adverse weather conditions, combined with low prices for stock and produce, the financial results have been reduced to a considerable extent, and it has been a somewhat difficult year for farmers generally. Improved farming methods have, however, been adopted by most of the settlers, and this largely minimized the losses which would otherwise have resulted, and on the whole fair progress has been made.

Three new settlements have been acquired during the year—*i.e.*, Otarao and Whakata under the group-settlement scheme, and Awanui which was opened for general application by ballot. These have provided holdings for sixteen additional settlers and good progress has already been made in effecting improvements.

AUCKLAND.

(K. M. GRAHAM, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

During the year two estates were purchased and opened for selection—namely, Mangakura Settlement, situated near Waerenga, containing an area of 942 acres, subdivided into seven holdings, and Puketarata Settlement, between Te Awamutu and Otorohanga, with an area of 422 acres, subdivided into five holdings. There was a fair demand for these sections, which are suitable for dairying, and all were selected at the ballot. Two one-man dairying farms were also acquired during the year, and allotted to discharged soldiers—namely, Tangao Settlement of 221 acres, and Rockburn Settlement of 76 acres.

Under the group-settlement provisions of the Act, five blocks, with a total area of 1,882 acres, have been acquired, resulting in the settlement of seventeen new settlers on the land.

The drop in the prices of primary products has adversely affected all settlers, and, although those on a number of the older and well-established settlements should be able to carry on without difficulty until the return of better conditions, a considerable number of the settlers on the newer settlements will have a difficult period ahead of them, and it is probable that in many cases the Land Board will have to consider applications for concessions in regard to rental payments, with a view to affording some measure of relief.

GISBORNE.

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

The Apanui Settlement, near Opotiki, was the only area balloted for during the last twelve months, and, being dairying land of good quality, the whole of the seven sections were readily disposed of to a good class of settler. Already the carrying-capacity of the property has been materially increased, and the present indications are that the purchase was quite a good one in the interests of the district. A property of 142 acres, situated near Te Karaka, was purchased under Part II of the Land Laws Amendment Act, 1928, on behalf of two applicants.

A number of settlers in the Ardkeen, Glencoe, and Repongaere Settlements were granted additional areas during the year, which should have the effect of ultimately increasing their prospects.

HAWKE'S BAY.

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

The Awamate Settlement, purchased last year, was opened in May, and all sections were taken up. It was unfortunate that the selectors should have experienced such a bad season when making a start, notwithstanding which, fair progress has been made and some excellent hay and fodder crops have been obtained. Towards the close of the year the Rylands Estate, five sections, totalling 1,246 acres, was offered, and four sections selected. These are suitable for dairying or mixed farming. A property of 25 acres was purchased under Part II of the Land Laws Amendment Act, 1928, and disposed of to two applicants. This area is in the vicinity of Hastings, and will be utilized for orchards.

A small area on the Tangoio Settlement has been set aside for the use of the Department of Agriculture in order to make experiments in connection with the eradication of blackberry.

TARANAKI.

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

A number of properties have been offered for purchase during the year. Some are unsuitable for subdivision and others were offered at a price considered to be too dear.

The Tunnel Timber Co.'s property at Tapuwae, comprising 3,350 acres, was purchased in August, 1930, and is being developed by the Department. An area of 730 acres of bush was felled last winter and spring, and a successful burn secured in February. A substantial sowing of English grasses has been given. The property is fully stocked, and further extensive purchases will be made to stock