

AUCKLAND.

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

No new estates have been purchased during the year.

In view of the guaranteed price for butterfat and the very satisfactory prices realized for wool, lambs, and beef cattle most of the settlers on the older-established farms have had a good year, while the improved conditions prevailing have given the settlers on the newer settlements a chance of consolidating their position.

The improved financial position of settlers is indicated by the satisfactory manner in which they have met their annual charges for rent and interest, while in many cases arrears which have been accumulated during the slump period have been cleared or substantially reduced.

Development-work on the Galatea Estate has been steadily proceeding. A further area of 2,134 acres has been cleared and grassed, 1,459 chains of fencing erected, while other essential improvements have been effected. The greater part of the estate continues to be worked as a sheep and cattle station, and owing to the good prices ruling for wool, sheep, and fat cattle the results of the year's operations from a financial point of view have been highly satisfactory.

GISBORNE.

(H. L. PRIMROSE, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

With good prices all round prevailing during the year and considerably less trouble from flooding, such as was experienced last year, most of our settlements are in a fairly good position, although perhaps a greater proportion of them have applied for relief under the Rehabilitation Act than in the case of ordinary Crown tenants. That, of course, may be due to the higher-priced land in the former case.

A good start has now been made on the Wharekaka drains, and the work will be pushed on to completion. Three sections held by one settler on the Ohuka Settlement were abandoned during the year, and it is doubtful if they will be again suitable for settlement on account of the recurring manuka and the cost of keeping it in check. This is one of the drawbacks to this settlement, although we have a good class of settler there.

Te Wera Estate is still farmed by the Department, and this year's revenue position is very satisfactory. That is the result of farming the property as a whole, and it is doubtful if the time has yet arrived for cutting the estate up.

HAWKE'S BAY.

(F. R. BURNLEY, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

No new areas have been purchased during the year.

The settlers on sheep and dairy propositions have had a good year. The results from orchard properties have been disappointing owing to unfavourable weather conditions.

TARANAKI.

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

No estates have been purchased under the Act during the year. The position of settlers generally shows a good improvement, owing to the phenomenal rise in the price of wool and, to a lesser extent, the guaranteed price for butter. There have been a few remissions of rent, but from now on the average efficient farmer should be able to pay his way.

WELLINGTON.

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

No new estates were acquired for settlement during the year. The majority of settlers on land-for-settlements estates are dairying and have received the benefit of the guaranteed price for butterfat. Those tenants who follow sheep-farming entirely have had a good year and should have something available for the improvement of their pastures and maintenance of buildings, fencing, &c.

Some settlements, in southern Wairarapa particularly, are menaced by erosion when the Ruamahanga River is high, and this matter is receiving consideration. The problem is one of considerable magnitude, and it seems as if some very comprehensive scheme of protection will require to be evolved to prevent further damage by the river.

NELSON.

(P. R. WILKINSON, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

There have been no purchases under the Land for Settlements Act during recent years, and most of the settlers now established are progressing satisfactorily.

MARLBOROUGH.

(G. I. MARTIN, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

No new estates were purchased in this district during the past year.

The whole of our land-for-settlement areas is devoted to pastoral and mixed farming, and my general report applies to areas under this heading.

WESTLAND.

(B. KING, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

No new estates were purchased in this district during the year.

The remarks embodied in the report on ordinary Crown lands applies equally to lands for settlement, and if prices ruling at present are maintained, with more favourable climatic conditions prevailing for the coming year, settlers generally should face the future without any misgiving.