

APPENDICES.

APPENDIX I.—SETTLEMENT OF CROWN LANDS.

EXTRACTS FROM REPORTS OF COMMISSIONERS OF CROWN LANDS.

NORTH AUCKLAND.

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

The past year has been a fairly good production period for North Auckland, and, as the district depends largely on dairy products, the state of the dairying industry gives a close measure of the North Auckland farmer's income.

The absence of severe flooding of low-lying grassland has been a welcome change from the experiences of the three previous years, and has enabled a good production yield to be attained on these areas. A prolonged winter period and late spring was experienced, followed by semi-drought conditions during the summer months, relieved, however, by good rainfall before any serious damage to pasture occurred. In the central portion of the district regular rainfall occurred throughout the year.

The butterfat-price obtained under the State-guaranteed plan has enabled tenants to pay their way and provide for farm-maintenance. Pig-production has improved, and good prices have been experienced during the year.

Dairy stock of all classes have sold at very fair prices, and fat and store cattle have also sold well. Grown cattle are really in short supply in the northern part of the land district.

The grazier Crown tenant received a much lower return for wool compared with the previous year. Sheep were not in as good demand, and values of aged sheep and store lambs receded. Fat lambs have been eagerly sought after and good prices obtained.

No large blocks of Crown land have been opened during the year, the selections totalling 7,325 acres of land which had already been previously opened for selection or which had been reoffered. Revenue increased 20 per cent. over the previous year.

Fruit and poultry farmers are not in a much improved position compared with the previous year. Individual ability, combined with prices received for products, has a particular application to success in this class of farming.

The Land-development Board has continued its policy of assisting individual tenants with finance for further development, and it is evident that progress in development of remaining Crown lands will largely be dependent on a continuation of this method of assistance.

A total of 506 applications under the Mortgagors and Lessees Rehabilitation Act, 1936, have been notified, and approximately 320 have been disposed of to date. A large number of voluntary settlements have been effected in terms of the Act.

AUCKLAND.

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

Conditions during the past year have been favourable to all classes of farming in this district. A hot summer was experienced, but the rainfall was well spread over the season, and the growth of pastures continued and production increased.

The circumstances of tenants generally remain sound and the annual charges have been well met.

New selections during the year comprise fifty-one holdings, of a total area of 12,381 acres.

Investigations under the Mortgagors and Lessees Rehabilitation Act have taken up a considerable amount of time of the field staff. Applications for relief involving 518 Crown tenants have been investigated, and, of these, 270 have been dealt with by the Adjustment Commissions.

It has been found that rent had been fixed on a fair and equitable basis, and, although remissions of arrears, which in most cases were an aftermath of the depression, have been granted, the rentals have been more or less sustained.

Steady progress has been made in developing the waste lands of the Crown. Loans to selectors of undeveloped Crown lands were authorized to the extent of £28,647.

GISBORNE.

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

The year under review has been a trying one for almost all classes of farmers, as weather conditions have been variable throughout the season. Although the spring was late, the growth was quite good, but there followed an exceptionally long spell of dry, hot weather lasting until about the end of February, when many parts of the district suffered as a result of flooding, resulting in many cases in serious loss to farmers—in damage to fences, losses of stock, and the silting-over of pastures.

Although there was a considerable drop in the price of wool as compared with the previous year, the average price is regarded as satisfactory, and the drop has been somewhat offset by the big improvement on last year's sheep-prices. The wool-clips have varied through the district, but on an