

counties large areas of unused Native lands really contain the very best land for settlement, and that in the interest of would-be settlers it is very advisable to acquire these lands by purchase at as early a date as possible.

In conclusion, I would point out that, with some 1,600 letters received inwards per month, and the daily-increasing number of settlers, all the energies of the office to keep pace with the work are taxed to the uttermost.

GERHARD MUELLER,  
Commissioner of Crown Lands.

#### SPECIAL SETTLEMENTS.

The number of selections relinquished or abandoned during the year is twenty-two, representing 978 acres. This leaves the total number of settlers now remaining as 274. Fifteen of the present village settlers have added to their holdings, by selecting under ordinary settlement conditions twenty-one sections, containing 734 acres.

The total amount of advances on improvements made during the year is £441 12s. 6d. This amount does not represent the value of the improvements effected, as many of the settlers manage to do without full advances on their improvements: in fact, they do not wish to burden themselves with the 5 per cent. interest payable thereon if they can possibly avoid it.

Notwithstanding the loss of twenty-two settlers during the twelve months, there is a decided increase in the number of stock, and the amount of substantial improvements effected in the settlements generally, the figures now showing: Horses, 322; cows, 668; sheep, 1,146; pigs, 487; poultry, 2,601; calves, 628; working bullocks, 66; chains of fencing, 5,190; area in grass, 2,891 acres; and area in garden and orchards, 92 acres.

The settlers, especially those in the northern settlements, have had a hard struggle, owing to the late continuously wet season rendering the roads almost impassable. In addition to this very serious disadvantage, most of the northern settlements are wholly surrounded by unoccupied forest lands, and the settlers are therefore unable to obtain employment; some of them have of necessity to take to the only means of earning a livelihood—viz., the gumfields, which in most cases are situated at considerable distances from their homes. The loss of time and additional cost of living on the gumfield and keeping a wife and family on the selection renders it very difficult for the settler to improve his holding and make both ends meet. Many of the original village settlers have relinquished their selections and taken up other lands near gumfields, but they are labouring under so many disadvantages that those who struggle with the initial difficulties and hold on to their selections will in the end be most successful.

Under the circumstances, I consider that the remaining settlers have done exceedingly well to hold their own.

NUMBER of Horses, Cows, Calves, Pigs, Poultry, Sheep, and Working Bullocks, with Chains of Fencing, in various Village Settlements; also, Acres in Grass, and Approximate Area in Gardens, Orchard, &c., to 31st March, 1893.

Name of Settlement.	Horses.	Cows.	Sheep.	Pigs.	Poultry.	Calves.	Chains of Fencing.	Working-bullocks.	Acres in Grass.	Acres in Garden and Orchard.
Whananaki ... ..	23	47	71	20	144	57	563	...	200	11
Motukaraka ... ..	20	104	...	23	153	96	710	5	506	13
Omaha ... ..	15	56	502	13	487	54	509	11	274	10
Te Aroha ... ..	36	89	20	37	310	58	625	4	285	6.5
Komakorau ... ..	5	8	...	7	88	10	44	...	14	2
Firewood Creek ... ..	12	30	30	8	36	8	122	...	102	3.5
Karaka ... ..	2	10	...	1	70	6	120	...	26	1
Swanson and Waitakerei ... ..	5	11	...	6	105	5	238	...	34	5
Waimamaku ... ..	13	29	...	13	235	28	99	5	191	7
Fern Flat ... ..	10	9	105	5	52	4	75	...	159	1.5
Hukerenui ... ..	66	105	...	53	307	99	899	...	319	11
Motatau ... ..	15	19	...	10	92	21	121	...	63	2
Pataua ... ..	16	32	58	9	84	34	224	...	116	3
Herekino ... ..	46	53	...	229	291	79	289	41	256	4
Takahue ... ..	12	11	219	...	...	10	102	...	178	3
Punakitere ... ..	26	55	141	53	147	59	450	...	168	9
	322	668	1,146	487	2,601	628	5,190	66	2,891	92.5

H. P. KAVANAGH, Village Steward.

#### TARANAKI.

Table A.—The area which was open for ordinary selection at the beginning of the year was 2,311 acres, which, added to the area which has been opened during the year—viz., 46,513 acres—made a total of 48,824 acres. Of this area 26,564 acres have been disposed of, leaving open at the end of the year 22,260 acres.