

selectors, £1,539. The total number of houses is twenty-two. Of these sixteen have been erected by the selectors. The total population is fifty-seven, and the number of dairy cows owned 117. This settlement was only opened for selection on the 12th March, 1900, and is hardly yet in working order. Dairy-farming will eventually be the main stay of the selectors. The Canadian thistle is also much in evidence on this estate.

Whitehall Estate (in Piako County, also a short distance from Cambridge).—Area, 8,959 acres. Up to date seven selectors have leased 7,668 acres, yielding an annual rental of £361. This estate was only opened for settlement in April last year, and no inspection has as yet been made.

Improved-farm Settlements.

Rangatira Improved-farm Settlement.—Area, 1,000 acres, of which only 300 acres is in occupation by three settlers, numbering with their families ten souls. The area of forest felled and grassed is 100 acres. The advances for bushfelling, houses, &c., amount to £192 6s. 4d. The total value of improvements now on the land is £556 16s.; the stock owned by the settlers being almost the same as last year—viz., 3 horses, 24 cattle, 6 pigs, and 2 sheep.

Awatuna Improved-farm Settlement.—Area, 1,000 acres, of which area 405 acres is in occupation by four settlers, altogether twelve souls. The area of forest felled is 394 acres, of which 375 acres is grassed. The advances amount to £1,111 15s. 10d., and the total value of improvements is £1,503 19s. The area under garden cultivation is 5½ acres. The stock consists of 7 horses, 19 cattle, 40 pigs, 20 sheep and 12 head of poultry.

Mangatu Improved-farm Settlement.—Area, 1,112 acres, of which 991 acres is in occupation by ten settlers, who with their families number sixty-one souls. The forest area felled is 684 acres; grassed, 654 acres. The advances amount to £1,645 5s. 5d. The total value of improvements now on the land amounts to £4,077 1s. The houses number ten; garden area, 14½ acres. The horses number 25, cattle 153, pigs 39, and 290 head of poultry. The settlement is holding its own.

Katui Improved-farm Settlement.—Area, 1,000 acres; area in occupation by seven settlers, 684 acres, who with their families number thirty-four souls; area of forest felled 380 acres, of which 370 acres is grassed. The advances amount to £1,066 11s. 4d., the total value of improvements being now £3,039 12s. 6d. The garden ground under cultivation is 13½ acres. The settlers own 20 horses, 158 cattle, 34 pigs, 50 sheep, and 215 head of poultry. Settlement holding its own.

Te Rau-a-Moa Improved-farm Settlement.—Area originally, 1,410 acres; area occupied now, 1,424 acres, held by twelve settlers, who with their families number forty-four souls; area of forest felled, 821 acres, of which 780½ acres is grassed. Total advances, £1,899 11s. 7d. Present total value of improvements, £2,012. The attention of the settlers being devoted to dairying, the number of cattle amounts to 255. Slight progress; but as settlement is now going on apace in the surrounding districts, and work is plentiful, I think the outlook is very hopeful, being on the main Kawhia Road.

Paemako Improved-farm Settlement.—Area, 1,412 acres, with additions 1,443 acres, occupied by twelve settlers, who with their families number forty-three souls; area grassed, 427 acres. Total advances, £709 14s. 8d.; total value of improvements at present being £1,100. The number of cattle owned by the settlers is 225. Steady progress, and, as the settlement is on the main Te Kuiti-Awakino-Taranaki Road, its outlook is hopeful.

Tawai Improved-farm Settlement.—Area, 411 acres. Originally subdivided into nineteen sections. There are now nine settlers, in occupation of 148 acres. The remaining sections are being opened for selection under the optional clause of "The Land Act, 1892." The whole of the 148 acres has been felled and 20 acres grassed. The population is seventeen. Total advances, £603; total value of improvements, £1,673.

Lands available for Future Settlement and Disposal.

The last corrected number of the "Land Guide" gives 174,992 acres of land as surveyed and open for selection immediately. Most of it is only second-class land, but is still fit for pasture. There is also now open for immediate selection as unsurveyed land some 335,000 acres, a large portion of it being good pastoral land, though generally heavily timbered. The lands which will be available for settlement in the near future are those in the Kawhia County, where the Crown has acquired about 155,000 acres (in addition to those opened up for close settlement during the past year). Between 60,000 and 70,000 acres of this area is now under survey into suitable sections, and most of it will probably be ready for opening before next March. The other available land is in the Opotiki and Whakatane Counties, where 50,000 acres will probably be available as soon as road access can be provided.

The correspondence, both for lands and survey, has been continually on the increase, and, as we have now nearly five thousand separate files, it is a difficult matter to provide for their safe deposit consistent with quick reference.

The messenger's book shows 22,117 letters received, 2,123 parcels, and 1,286 telegrams; also despatched, 25,082 letters, 8,676 parcels, and 1,307 telegrams.

GERHARD MUELLER,
Commissioner of Crown Lands.