

prevalent or destructive as in former years." He also urges that steps be taken to have seeds of hardy grasses sown where fires have occurred in Crown forests, with the object of checking future fires, and gradually converting the denuded forest lands into revenue-producing grazing-runs, &c.

*Land reserved and alienated under Acts.*—The total area reserved for various purposes during the year was 1,574 acres, and 42 acres was granted under special Acts.

*Inspection by Rangers.*—The total number of inspections made during the past year was 1,291, the total area involved in such inspections being 361,831 acres. The amount of improvements required by law to be done upon this area was £69,516 10s. 7d., the total amount actually effected being £139,992 13s. 5d. This sum shows improvements to the value of £70,476 2s. 10d. done in excess of actual requirements by law. The number of selectors found resident on their sections is 899. The total area of bush felled is 31,678 acres, and 26,743 acres of this is sown in grass. Of these inspections, 216 were made by Ranger B. P. Bayly, twenty-four by Ranger D. H. Lusk, 271 by Ranger J. M. McKay, 241 by Ranger J. Maxwell, 384 by Ranger F. C. Ewen, nine by District Surveyor A. H. Vickerman, thirty-five by District Surveyor T. K. Thompson, and 111 by Assistant Surveyor H. A. Warner. During the past year Rangers Lusk, Maxwell, and McKay have devoted a great deal of time in estimating kauri and other timber for sale.

*Land under the Land for Settlements Acts.*

*Whitehall Estate.*—Area, 8,959 acres. Number of selectors, 8; resident on land, 6. Value of improvements on land effected by selectors, £1,277 8s.; value of improvements pertaining to estate, £1,277. Population, 22. Number of houses, 9. At present purely a grazing country. Apparently selectors are making a permanent home for themselves, the houses erected being generally very good. They are endeavouring to obtain a butter-factory for next season, available for the Whitehall settlers. This should improve matters, and tend to give better returns than present surroundings afford.

*Rangiatea Estate.*—Area, 4,004 acres. Number of selectors, 19; number resident on sections, 16. Value of improvements effected, £4,375; increase for year, £420 1s. Number of population, 101; increase for year, 1. Number of milch cows, 403; increase for year, 35. Dairying is still in operation, and selectors are doing fairly well, and making permanent homes. A fairly satisfactory season has been experienced, with good returns from factory. Settlement so far has been a success.

*Opouriao Estate.*—Area, 7,604 acres. Number of selectors on estate, 61 (4 on Taneatua Township). Value of improvements effected, £28,200; increase for the year, £6,000. Population, 288; increase for year, 36. Number of homes on the estate, 64. Number of milch cows, 850; increase for year, 444. One selection of 9 acres lately forfeited, and one of 280 acres is the only unoccupied land. The latter is a rough section, and difficult of access. Of the settlers, some forty-one have been in occupation more than six years, and have fulfilled all conditions. The maize-crop this year has escaped frost, and a good return is anticipated. The cheese-factory is in full swing and giving good returns. A much smaller area of maize is in cultivation, the settlers giving most of their attention now to dairying, with satisfactory results. This settlement may now be considered to be in a most satisfactory condition, and its success is apparently assured.

*Okauia Estate.*—Area, 5,920 acres. Number of selectors, 9; number resident on land, 6. Value of improvements effected by selectors, £1,670; increase for year, £275 11s. Population, 12. Number of houses, 7. Very little further advance has taken place on this settlement during the past year. The soil is only medium in quality. Where the bush has been fallen and grassed the land, however, is fairly good, and well adapted for grazing purposes. The establishment of a dairy factory within reach is much required, and is the only course open to make the settlement generally remunerative to its occupiers.

*Karapiro Estate.*—Area, 2,276 acres. Number of selectors, 15 (one section was handed over to the Defence Department for a rifle range); selectors resident on the land, 14. Value of improvements required to be effected, £572 4s.; value effected, £2,826; increase for year, £933. Population, 44; increase for year, 4. Number of houses on the estate, 11. Number of milch cows, 190, being an increase for year of twenty cows. The Crown Lands Ranger states in his report, "The Canadian thistle is still in evidence, but kept down. When last on this estate I was shown the effects of an exterminator used by one of the settlers which apparently is efficacious, but cost and general utility cannot yet be stated until the result of further trials has been ascertained." This settlement as a whole is in a thriving condition. The dairy industry is the principal source of revenue. The improvements effected undoubtedly show that the selectors are making permanent homes, and the general outlook can be considered satisfactory.

*Fencourt Estate.*—Area, 7,105 acres. Number of selectors, 35; number resident, 27. Value of improvements effected, £3,448; increase for year, £1,909. Population, 89; increase for year, 42. Milch cows, 391; increase for year, 274. Number of houses, 28; erected by settlers, 22. With the exception of some three or four selections this settlement may be considered in a progressive and sound condition. The dairy industry has increased considerably, and with further promise of extension this settlement promises to be a success and afford good returns to the settlers on it, as well as carry a considerable population on the area farmed.

*Improved-farm Settlements.*

*Te Rau-a-moa Improved-farm Settlement.*—Original area, 1,410 acres; area now occupied 1,424 acres, held by ten settlers, who with their families number forty-seven souls. Area of forest felled, 821 acres, of which 703 acres is now in grass. Total advances amount to £1,899 11s. 7d. Present total value of improvements, £2,159 18s.

*Paemako.*—Area originally, 1,412 acres; area occupied, 1,343½ acres, held by eleven settlers, who with their families number forty-three. Area of forest felled, 57 acres; area in grass, 402 acres. Total advances, £709 14s. 8d. Total value of improvements amount to £1,066 11s.