

A few of the recent settlements are still in a transition period, the settlers being still affected by the adverse circumstances of the past few years, but most of the settlements are in a highly developed and prosperous condition, and are widely known as comprising some of the best dairy farms in the district.

It may be mentioned in connection with the Selwyn Settlement that an area of 53,196 acres on what is known as the Mamaku Plateau, has been handed over to the State Forest service. This area contains a large quantity of very fine milling-timber.

GISBORNE.

(V. I. BLAKE, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

The old-established settlements in this district are still in a flourishing state. As was the case last year, in one or two instances men who paid too high a goodwill have had to be helped out, but the great majority of these settlers are in a very sound position. Some men who freeholded on the deferred-payment system found it hard to meet payments, and there have been comparatively few applications to freehold this year. The soldier settlements are, as usual, dealt with under a separate heading.

HAWKE'S BAY.

(J. D. THOMSON, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

No new areas were acquired in this district under the Land for Settlements Act during the year under review. The settlements acquired in the earlier years of the settlement scheme are now well established, and the infrequency of applications to transfer evidences a desire on the part of the settlers to retain their farms.

The settlement farmers have experienced a remarkable year, both in quantity of farm-produce and also in the prices obtained therefor, and it is highly probable that, if the future yields the same promise, the minds of the tenants will be turning towards the acquisition of the freehold of their lands.

The later-acquired estates were for the repatriation of returned soldiers for the most part, and the progress and development of these are dealt with in a separate report.

TARANAKI.

(J. COOK, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

Certain settlement areas are being reopened, notably Pui and parts of Tawhiwhi, and it is hoped that these lands will now become occupied on the greatly reduced rentals that have been arranged. It is also expected to offer the vacant sections on Kohura for selection at an early date. Katere Settlement, comprising suburban allotments close to the Taranaki Fertilizer Company's works at Smart Road, is still under consideration, there being no immediate prospect of a demand arising for these sections.

WELLINGTON.

(T. BROOK, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

Including those occupied by discharged soldiers, there are 130 settlements in this district, of which number the older settlements still continue in a very satisfactory position. The more recent purchases are, generally speaking, not in such a good position, but as most of these have been selected by discharged soldiers, and as such will have the benefit of the legislation regarding revaluation the position, given reasonably favourable conditions, should considerably improve in the near future. The revenue received for the year by way of rents and other payments under this heading amounted to £72,916.

There were no new settlements purchased during the year.

NELSON.

(N. C. KENSINGTON, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

No new settlements were opened up during the year, but the revalued sections in Tutaki, Matakitaki, and Maruia Settlements were opened for selection during the latter part of the year. Of a total of seven sections in Matakitaki Settlement, four have been selected, while eight sections in Maruia Settlement have been selected, leaving three still available for selection there. Three allotments in Tutaki Settlement are still available for disposal. On all the older-acquired settlements the settlers appear to be on a firm footing. Some settlers had arranged to purchase their sections on deferred payment, but, owing to the slump of late years, were unable to meet their payments, and in some cases they have found it desirable to reconvert to renewable lease.

MARLBOROUGH.

(J. STEVENSON, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

Generally speaking, all the earlier settlements are now upon an excellent footing. Very few transfers of the leases of these take place. The settlements specially purchased for discharged soldiers are dealt with under the heading of "Soldier Settlements."

An area of excellent dairying-land was recently purchased in the neighbourhood of Kaikoura for the purpose of subdivision. This property will be known as "Fernleigh Settlement." The quality of the land and its easy access should ensure the subdivisions being well applied for.