

EXTRACTS FROM REPORTS OF COMMISSIONERS OF CROWN LANDS.

NORTH AUCKLAND.

(O. N. CAMPBELL, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

Very few lands under this heading have changed hands during the year, and settlers are endeavouring, with the limited funds at their disposal, to increase production by improving pastures in order to mitigate against low prices received for produce. Tauraroa Settlement, near Whangarei, comprising 1,142 acres, was allotted in two holdings during the year under Part II of the Land Laws Amendment Act, 1928. These will be utilized for mixed farming.

AUCKLAND.

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

A number of properties were offered to the Crown for settlement during the year, but, after inspection, practically all were found unsuitable for the purpose, or the prices asked were out of the question if settlers were to have any chance of success.

The Wairakau Settlement, of 2,001 acres, situated near Te Aroha, was acquired during the year and offered for selection in fourteen sections ranging from 65 to 490 acres.

Under the group-settlement scheme two blocks, with an area of 469 acres, have been acquired, resulting in four additional settlers being settled on the land.

The above new selections are all dairying propositions, excepting two mixed farms.

Most of the lessees of settlement lands are engaged in dairying and have been caught by the prevailing slump in the price of butterfat; but, in spite of this, generally speaking, they have made a genuine effort to meet their obligations to the Crown. A number of the settlers, however, have had to apply for concessions to enable them to carry on over a difficult period, and all such cases have received the sympathetic attention of the Land Board.

GISBORNE.

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

One or two areas close to Gisborne were offered to the Crown for settlement purposes, but for various reasons were found unsuitable. Considerable inquiries were made earlier in the year for information about the group-settlement provisions of the Act, but the adverse conditions prevailing seem to have prevented the completion of any deals. Only one property of two holdings was acquired under this heading, being Mr. E. R. Renner's place at Rere, on which a couple of first-class men were placed.

HAWKE'S BAY.

(J. F. QUINN, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

The last settlement to be purchased, Rylands, has been under occupation for a little over twelve months. The lessees are all engaged in sheep-farming, but owing to drought and the slump have not been able to show much progress. With further development and a return to normal conditions this settlement should in time prove successful.

Settlers on the Awamate Settlement are making good progress; they are all keen farmers and anxious to make a success of their holdings.

No new areas were purchased during the year, although a number of properties were offered and reports furnished.

TARANAKI.

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

Two areas were offered for purchase during the year, but the properties did not prove suitable for the purpose of closer subdivision, and the Land Purchase Board decided to take no action.

A great improvement in ragwort control on settlement areas is now in evidence where lessees are using chlorate and also employing small mobs of sheep.

The grazing lessees on settlements have experienced another very difficult year, and substantial concessions will have to be given.

Dairymen are fairly well holding their own so far as rentals are concerned, although they are finding it extremely difficult to maintain a sound position all round. Excessive goodwills have been paid in many instances, and these commitments will require adjustment before matters are likely to improve.

Portions of the Ratapiko and Tawhiwhi Settlements are being administered by the Department, both grazing areas. The former is being farmed by means of Discharged Soldiers Settlement Realization Account and the latter is under grazing tenancy. The areas will be reoffered as soon as it is considered expedient to do so.

Piu Settlement is one of the least successful settlements in this district and at the present time there are several areas vacant. The rentals are being revised and these areas will be reoffered in the near future.

WELLINGTON.

(H. W. C. MACKINTOSH, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

In common with all other farmers, tenants on estates purchased by the Crown have had a poor year as far as prices for their produce is concerned. The yields have, in many cases, been better than in previous years, but the depressed state of the markets has left the farmer very little with which to meet his obligations and nothing for maintenance of pastures. The settlers on the earlier purchases, who have now become firmly established, though hard pressed, are coming through the depression