

APPENDICES.

APPENDIX I.—SETTLEMENT OF CROWN LANDS.

EXTRACTS FROM THE REPORTS OF THE COMMISSIONERS OF CROWN LANDS.

NORTH AUCKLAND.

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

Weather conditions throughout the year have been favourable. This district experienced a good autumn, a mild winter, and an early spring with ample rainfall and no serious floods. Feed has been plentiful, and, in addition, hay in large quantities has been saved and much ensilage pitted. It is interesting to note that silos are coming more into favour each year, and this method of preserving fodder is proving most suitable for climatic conditions.

Despite depressed markets for all primary products, old pastures are being maintained and improved by the application of increasing quantities of manure, and as more land is being brought into cultivation each year an increasing volume of production can be looked for annually for many years to come. Owing to the particularly low prices received for wool and beef, graziers are having a particularly hard time. The price of butterfat is on a relatively higher level, and, wherever possible, settlers are turning their attention to dairying and an increase in butter exports is assured.

Unless there is an early improvement in wool prices, it is difficult to see how some of the poor hilly country, of which there is fortunately very little in this district, can be prevented from deteriorating.

Much excellent pioneering work in the growing of citrus fruit, tung, passion-fruit, tobacco, &c., is being carried out by private enterprise in the Northern area. These developments are as yet not sufficiently advanced to prove their commercial possibilities, but it is clear that climatic conditions and soil are suitable, and that the North will carry an increasing population of small holders.

The main highways through the district have in the main been much improved, and there are now all-weather roads throughout the area. With the assistance of the unemployed, the Public Works Department, and the local authorities, much improved access is being provided to out-back settlers.

Settlers are also taking advantage of the assistance offered under the Unemployment Act in bringing in and improving their holdings.

During the year an area of 37,831 acres was selected by 256 selectors. These holdings comprised unimproved rural land, and the better areas were much sought after. Further blocks of unimproved land, mostly worked out kauri-gum reserves, are being made available for settlement this year.

Although settlers are having difficulty in meeting their obligations, very few holdings are being abandoned or transferred, and, in the main, settlers are putting up an excellent fight against the adverse market conditions.

AUCKLAND.

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

The autumn of 1931 was not favourable to growth of pasture, and many settlers had to resort to the early feeding-out of hay and ensilage in an endeavour to maintain production from their dairy herds. The months of April, May, and June were notable for an exceptional number of heavy frosts, and though matured stock wintered fairly well, the winter conditions affected yearling stock rather severely, largely due to the check in pasture growth in the early autumn. A good beginning, however, was made with the new dairying season, which was ushered in with mild weather bringing growth away rapidly; and reports from various parts of the district indicated that pastures generally were in good condition.

From early in December the rainfall was very light and well below the average right through to the middle of February or later, and this seriously reduced butterfat returns as compared with the same period of other years, and appreciably checked the growth of root crops sown for supplementary and winter feed. However, timely rains broke up the drought, and the season continued with renewed growth and every indication that the production year, despite the setback, will prove fairly satisfactory.

In recognition of the fact that the wise use of manures, coupled with good management, is one of the best means at the disposal of dairy-farmers for maintaining and increasing their returns to offset lower prices, the Land Board has given careful and sympathetic consideration to all applications for relief or assistance from settlers with a view to ensuring that efficient fertilizing of dairy-farm pastures shall be continued, and both land and stock securities preserved to the fullest possible extent.