

1889.

NEW ZEALAND.

VILLAGE HOMESTEAD SPECIAL-SETTLEMENTS

(GENERAL RESULTS OF, ON 31ST MARCH, 1889).

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.

THE conditions under which the lands in these special settlements were selected are briefly these :—

The tenure is perpetual lease, and the first term is for thirty years, with a right of renewal for subsequent terms of twenty-one years. The rental is 5 per cent. on the capital value, which in no case could be assessed at less than £1 per acre. No allotment is to exceed 50 acres, and selectors who are married are preferred to those who are single. Advances are made to the settlers as follows: £20 towards the erection of a dwelling-house, £1 5s. per acre for under-scrubbing and bush-felling, and £1 5s. an acre for burning, grassing, fencing, and other improvements, but the advances only apply up to a limit of 20 acres. The dwelling-house must be erected within six months of the date of selection, except in case of bush lands, when it may be delayed until after the first burn, but no longer. Interest on such advances is charged at the rate of 5 per cent. per annum. Each selector must live on the land, and within two years must cultivate one acre and within four years half the remainder of his section. A selector can only hold one section, and he cannot subdivide or sublet it, but he may transfer it with the consent of the Commissioner of Crown Lands for his district. If the selector fails to comply with the conditions the Commissioner may, upon sufficient proof, declare that the settler's interest in the land is forfeited.

The settlements, which number 75, have at this date for the most part been in existence for a little over two years, and it is found that out of 1,196 persons who took up land on the special conditions offered 674 remain; but to these must be added 204 new settlers who have by transfer stepped into the places of some of those who have left, thus bringing up the number of special settlers to 878. In addition to these 878, there are at present 51 settlers by ordinary land tenure; so that the settlements now contain 929 settlers, and of these 155 are at present non-resident.

The area occupied by the settlers nominally remaining on the 31st March last, was 28,363 acres, and of this area the following had been brought under cultivation, namely :—

In garden	...	...	...	...	...	...	264 acres.
In orchard	...	...	...	...	...	...	88 acres.
In grain crop	...	...	...	...	...	...	1,988 acres.
In other crops	...	...	...	...	...	...	122 acres.
In grass	...	...	...	...	...	...	4,311 acres.
Total	...	...	...	...	...	...	6,773 acres.

Or nearly one-fourth of the whole area taken up.

The settlers had the following stock on the land :—Sheep, 185; cattle, 1,335; horses, 483; pigs, 494; goats, 2.

The cost of the settlements is as follows :—

The nominal value of the land may be put at	...	...	...	£35,000
To which add—				
Advances on sections abandoned	...	...	...	585
Advances on sections not abandoned	...	...	...	18,456
Road works executed for benefit of settlements	...	...	...	12,982
Cost of locating settlers	...	...	...	495
Cost of lectures, &c.	...	...	...	483
Fruit trees, &c., for Auckland settlers	...	...	...	779
Total	...	...	...	£68,780

The yearly rental payable by the settlers is £1,770; interest on advances, £923; total, £2,693; and this amount capitalised at 5 per cent. is £53,860: so that if settlers were to pay their rents regularly Government would nominally stand to lose the difference between £53,860 and £68,780, namely, £14,920 by the transaction, but of this sum of £14,920 the expenditure on roads has been £12,982; so that the settlements themselves would cost the country £1,938, together with the pay

and expenses of the extra supervision by the Rangers, say £1,034, thus making a total of £2,972. This amount on the above supposition would not be nominally altered to any serious extent, even if further advances were made to the settlers, for the interest payable by them would be proportionately increased, but the amount will become greater if more persons throw up their holdings.

The settlers are, however, at present in arrear in payment of rent, £1,394, and interest, £329, making a total of £1,723, of which sum £1,327 is owing by the Auckland settlers, notwithstanding that they have received advances amounting to £9,232, and road works have been executed to the extent of £12,414, on which they have been engaged.

An analysis of the occupations of the settlers, prior to the time when they took up the land, shows that 765 were labourers, 132 were called settlers (probably persons accustomed to country life), 103 were carpenters, 90 were farmers, 46 were bushmen, and the rest were persons of 60 odd different trades or callings.

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SUMMARY STATEMENT, giving RESULTS of VILLAGE SETTLEMENTS on 31st March, 1889.

