

The *Special-settlement Associations*, as shown by Table M, consisting of Gordon, near Te Aroha; Tuakau, in Raglan County; Canterbury, at Hokianga; and North Island Land Association, near Matata, Bay of Plenty, are in operation. The first three settlements have together sixty-one selectors residing on their sections, and holding an area of 5,666 acres; of this number some fifty-three selectors are still owing £515. The last association—*i.e.*, the North Island Land Association—consisting of forty-three members, have commenced operations upon 20,000 acres of swamp-land near Matata, and are engaged in running the necessary drains.

Table N, *Homestead Lands*: There is little to mention, as only 38 acres were selected during the year, but out of areas granted in past years the selections of five selectors, containing 600 acres, have been forfeited for non-fulfilment of residential conditions, the total area now held being 12,870 acres, occupied by ninety-eight selectors, and who will receive Crown grants as their conditions of settlement become fulfilled.

This year we have a return of *Small Grazing-runs*, as shown by Table O, mostly held in the Bay of Plenty District. There are four additional holders, occupying 14,658 acres, or an average of 3,664 acres each holder; the total area of small grazing-runs in this land district being 57,803 acres, held by seventeen persons.

Table Q need only be referred to as showing the discovery of silver-lodes at the Great Barrier Island, and the issue by the Land Board of eleven mining leases, covering an area of 270 acres. Whether the lodes or reefs are sufficiently large enough and rich enough to pay for crushing has yet to be proved.

There is only one more table which I need mention—*viz.*, Table S, which treats of arrears. A glance at it shows that there are 274 settlers in arrears, owing £1,621.

Visiting of sections by the Rangers, in order to ascertain that the improvement conditions are being carried out in accordance with the law, now involves a very large amount of travelling, when it is borne in mind that the total holders under improvement conditions now number some 2,082 holdings, containing 433,309 acres of land, scattered all over this extensive district, with means of access generally of the worst description. However, I am glad to say that this branch of the work is now being kept well in hand, and the general result of nearly all inspections goes to show that the value of the work done is in excess of requirements. I take this opportunity of testifying to the value of Mr. Hill's (the late Ranger's) services, and to regret that age and growing infirmities alone prevented him from being able to cope with the work of inspection now carried on by Mr. Bayly, his successor.

*State Forests.*—These forests, all North of Auckland, are carefully looked after by Messrs. H. J. Wilson and J. Maxwell, who also make report upon sectional improvements as well. Out of the burnt portion of the Pupipuhi Forest which was sown with grass last year, some 2,479 acres have been leased for seven years, in four sections, bringing in an annual rental of £47. Sundry kauri-trees and other items have brought in a revenue of £142 in addition to the above. The Waerenga Plantation has been handed over to the Agricultural Department, who are now continuing operations.

Before concluding, I will briefly summarise the land available for future settlement, and commence by saying that there are now open for selection all over the district 1,317 sections of surveyed land, containing 119,150 acres, all of which is quite fit for pastoral purposes, and a good deal of it for agricultural. There are also some 235,600 acres open for selection as "unsurveyed," all of which is fit for settlement, but mostly of a pastoral character. In addition to this land there are fit for settlement the following areas as noted below, with general description, arranged in geographical order:—

*Mangonui County.*—Takahue Survey District, Parish of Maungataniwha, &c., say, 31,460 acres, chiefly forest-land of good quality and fairly accessible.

*Bay of Islands County.*—Ruapekapeka Parish, &c., say, 25,000 acres forest- and fern-land of good quality, mostly fit for pastoral purposes.

*Hokianga County.*—Whangape Survey District, 9,000 acres, all good forest-land; also, between Hokianga and Dargaville and down to Mangakahia Stream, some 200,000 acres of available good land, all fit for settlement.

*Whangarei County.*—Opuawhanga Survey District, also Parishes of Tauraroa, Waikiekie, Waipu, &c., 20,000 acres, all fairly good forest-land.

*Otamatea County.*—Takatoka Swamp, 18,000 acres; also, Parish of Omaru, of rich swamp- and forest-land.

*Rodney County.*—Pakiri and sundry other parishes, say, 5,000 acres of available forest-land.

*Waitemata County.*—There are some 20,000 acres left, which can be made available for pastoral purposes, but it will only be taken up in small areas, being generally poor quality.

*Manukau County.*—Parish of Otau, about 18,000 acres of broken forest-land of fair quality, now being surveyed into sections; will probably all be taken up.

*Waikato County.*—About 10,000 acres in Parish of Taupiri, good fern- and forest-land, between Matahuru and Mangawhara Streams.

*Raglan County.*—Awaroa Survey District, also Parishes of Waipa, Karamu, and Pirongia, say, 13,000 acres of good forest-land though broken.

*Coromandel County.*—Parish of Mahakirau, &c., 13,000 acres of good forest-land, 5,000 acres of which has been subdivided and will be shortly offered.

*Ohinemuri County.*—There are fully 30,000 acres of available land, but, being mostly swampy, it is not advisable to throw it open just yet.

*Whakatane County.*—About 50,000 acres of broken forest-land can be made immediately available, but, being so far back and broken, will certainly not be inquired for yet.

*Rotorua County.*—About 7,000 acres along the railway and road-line of good forest-land could be at once subdivided, and doubtless would all be taken up for grazing.

The above summary gives a total of 805,000 acres still available in the immediate future for extension of settlement in this district; but it may not be out of place to point out that in many