

SOUTHLAND.

During the year eighty-two co-operative contracts have been in operation, employing 290 men. Of this number, sixty-one contracts are completed and twenty-one were still incomplete at the end of the year.

The average wage per man per working-day of eight hours on outside co-operative contracts was 6s. 8d. per day. On improved-farm settlements the wages were less, being 4s. 10d. per day. It will be seen by this that the wages earned by settlement men are lower than the wages earned by outside co-operative labour, although the prices are on the same basis. This fact I put down to the settlement men living close to the work and letting their home-work interfere with the contract-work, also to their returning-time, over which there is no check.

The work on the whole has been carried out in a fairly satisfactory manner, and no complications worth mentioning have occurred.

There has not been much demand for work during the latter part of the year, as labourers have been scarce, and there is no reason why any man who wants work should be idle. There is very little competition for open contracts, as all the contractors are busy.

I have not included the men working on the Te Anau-Milford Track in my co-operative report, as I have not classified them as co-operative contractors.

D. BARRON, Chief Surveyor.

APPENDIX V.—IMPROVED-FARM SETTLEMENTS.

EXTRACTS FROM THE REPORTS OF COMMISSIONERS OF CROWN LANDS AND OTHERS ON THE IMPROVED-FARM SETTLEMENTS FOR THE TWELVE MONTHS ENDED THE 31st MARCH, 1900.

AUCKLAND.

Rangitira.—Only two resident settlers, who with their families number ten souls. Bush felled, 74 acres; grassed, 64 acres; fencing erected, 44 chains; only an acre and three-quarters garden. Stock: Three horses, twenty-three head of cattle, three sheep, four pigs, and twenty head of poultry. Total value of improvements, £440.

Awatuna.—Four resident settlers with families numbering thirteen souls. Bush felled, 394 acres; burnt and grassed, 366 acres; fencing erected, 140 chains; in garden, 8 acres. Horses, 6; cattle, 19; pigs, 21; sheep, 21; head of poultry, 31. Total value of improvements, £1,386.

Mangatu.—Nine resident settlers with families numbering sixty-four souls. Bush felled, 674 acres; burnt and grassed, 644 acres; fencing erected, 449 chains; 17½ acres of garden. Fifteen horses, 110 head of cattle, forty-five pigs, and 204 head of poultry. Total value of improvements, £3,070.

Katui.—Seven resident settlers with families numbering forty-five souls. Bush felled, 393 acres; burnt and grassed, 355 acres; fencing erected, 600 chains; 16½ acres in garden. Sixteen horses, 127 head of cattle, thirty-four pigs, twenty sheep, and 290 head of poultry. Total value of improvements, £2,475.

I regret to have to add that these settlements are retrograding in almost every respect.

GERHARD MUELLER, Commissioner of Crown Lands.

AUCKLAND CENTRAL.

Te Rauamoā Improved-farm Settlement, Block IX., Pirongia Survey District.—Only four of the original settlers are still remaining in the Te Rauamoā Settlement. Some have abandoned their holdings, and three have transferred their sections to others. 682 acres have been felled, burnt, and grassed, 28½ acres felled, but not burnt, and 26½ acres of fern land have been laid down in grass. There are five houses and five whares on the land.

The amount paid to selectors during the year for houses, bushfelling, &c., is £249 7s. 9d.; the total payments made, past and present, amount to £1,272 8s. 9d.; and the total value of improvements now on the land, including that paid by the Government, is £1,868 3s. 6d. The number of selectors now on the land is ten; the number of sections in settlement is ten; and the number of persons resident is forty-two. The number of cattle is 553.

Paemako Improved-farm Settlement.—The quality of the land in this settlement is not nearly so good as that at Te Rauamoā, and I fear the outlook for the settlers will be rather gloomy when the roadworks cease. The number of settlers in occupation is 12; persons resident, 45. The total area in grass is 459 acres, and the number of cattle is 145. The total amount paid to settlers for improvements during the year is £42 13s. 2d., and the total payments made to selectors during the