

heavy bush has to be destroyed before the holdings can be laid down in grass. Extensive improvements have been carried out to this end. The dairy industry has taken firm hold, and is extending. Settlement is described as of a *bonâ fide* and permanent character. There have been large increases in the stock carried, and a prosperous future is predicted for the settlers in this part of the Auckland District.

The Ranger's report for *Tauranga*, *Piako*, and *Rotorua* Counties indicates that there is a good demand for land in these counties; that the country takes grass readily, and shows every promise of profitable returns.

The Rangers report that there is a great run upon swamp land in the *Whakatane County*. Excellent results have been obtained from this class of land wherever brought into cultivation. The cost of draining, and the time taken in accomplishing this, are necessarily considerable; but the returns amply repay the selector. Special mention is made of the excellent pastures of grass and clover which are produced, and which offer a favourable opportunity for dairying.

It is satisfactory to learn from the reports that the demand for land in the distant *Opotiki* portion of the land district is keen, as there are large areas of hilly bush lands now available for settlement, and it is anticipated that their occupation and conversion into grazing-areas will add materially to the capabilities of that district.

Land for Settlements.—The special reports of the Rangers upon the six Land for Settlements estates in the Auckland District disclose on the whole a satisfactory condition of affairs. The chief pursuits of the farmers comprise dairying and general farming; and, in the case of the *Opouriao* Settlement, maize is largely grown. The progress in regard to improvements and cultivations and prospects are stated to be good.

Special-settlement Associations.—The six remaining associations are fully reported upon by the Rangers. The latest is that upon the *Otanake* Block, south-west of *Te Kuiti*, which was set aside for the returned troopers who took part in the South African war.

Hawke's Bay Land District.

The Commissioner of Crown Lands summarises the progress and condition of the settlers in this district, and brings into prominence the considerable amount of improvements, including fencing, which have been effected. During the year the two Rangers visited 708 properties, with an area of 379,467 acres, on which improvements to the value of £96,995 should have been made. The value of those actually effected was, however, £282,649, nearly three times in excess of the statutory requirements; and the defaulters were only 88 in number, or 12 per cent. of those visited.

In this district sheep and cattle raising, dairying, and agricultural pursuits are carried on generally with great advantage and profit to the settlers. The evidence of the extension of one of the most profitable industries is manifested in the large number of factories and creameries scattered throughout the district, all running at full time for a considerable portion of the year. Prosperity is also indicated by the volume of export in the shape of wool, mutton, and beef. Under such circumstances it is not surprising to learn that the tenants comply so satisfactorily with all the conditions of their leases and licenses, and that arrears of rent are so few and small in amount.

Improved-farm Settlements.—The small number of improved-farm selectors in *Hawke's Bay* have considerably more improvements than are legally required. Their sound position is displayed in the large number of cattle, sheep, &c., which they possess; and as they also are enabled to take part in dairying it will be understood that they are, if not already well established, in a fair way to become so.

Land for Settlements.—The favourable condition common to all phases of settlement in *Hawke's Bay*, is set forth in the Commissioner's reports, and is brought out clearly in the satisfactory results which have been achieved by the settlers who have been so fortunate as to secure holdings under this system. It will be noticed that the residential, improvement, and other monetary requirements under the system have been complied with, and even more than complied with in many instances. The great number of people resident, the class of dwellings erected, the varying and profitable methods of cultivation and production, the large number of stock carried, testify to the sound and thriving condition of the settlements.

Taranaki Land District.

The Commissioner of Crown Lands reports that 441 holdings, comprising an area of 156,050 acres, were inspected during the year. The value of improvements effected thereon