

ments good, substantial, and extensive; residence conditions satisfactory. This county principally bush land, with considerable area of limestone country; good grazing land. This and dairying the principal industries. Settlers generally doing well, and in prosperous condition.

*Waipa County.*—Only a few sections in this county requiring inspection. Those in occupation are all on rough, broken bush lands, only adapted for grazing purposes. Conditions of tenure complied with in most cases; improvements effected are up to requirements. Land only medium. Settlement progressing slowly.

*Rodney County.*—Land in this county of very medium quality and patchy. Very few Crown tenants remaining; most of these now acquire the freehold of lands previously taken up. Residence and other conditions generally complied with, but settlement not increasing or as prosperous as in other localities visited. The want of a local market is a great drawback. Fruit in large quantities and other small produce can be grown, but there is no outlet at a remunerative price. An attempt to introduce dairying extensively is now being made; in fact, two or three creameries and one factory have already started. This should improve matters.

*Otamatea County.*—Area inspected small, land as a rule poor, settlement increasing slowly, and that for the greater part by local owners extending their present holdings. Large areas of gum and kauri lands have been worked in this county, and have been hitherto its principal resources; and as these disappear arable land, hitherto unnoticed, is coming under the plough, and with cultivation will keep a certain amount of stock, but it is too poor to induce close settlement or support a large population.

*Manukau County.*—Area of land unoccupied very small, and Crown tenants few in number; those visited were mostly settlers on poor open gum lands, which, being comparatively near Auckland market, can be worked to advantage. Improvements effected are according to conditions of tenure, but not extensive; gum-digging and grazing a few cattle are the settlers' means of livelihood. These settlers being within reach of a market can utilise land that otherwise would not pay to cultivate, and even very inferior lands having a market within reach will all be worked in time, especially while the present demand for land remains unsatisfied.

*General.*—My experience during the past year is that settlement is on the increase, demand for land as great as ever, that the improvements effected and surroundings indicate both progress and stability of settlement, and I should say that the ensuing twelve months will see fully as much if not a greater area taken up, and the wealth of the districts increased both in population, cultivation, and stock.

Ranger McKay reports:—

During the year I have inspected 487 sections in the Whangarei, Hobson, and Bay of Islands Counties. With the exception of a few sections the required improvements have been effected, whilst a large number of the more recent settlers in the Mangakahia and Purua districts have been especially energetic, and are well in advance with their improvements.

With regard to settlement in the Hukerenui Survey District, in the cases of those who have large holdings satisfactory progress is noticeable, but some of the settlers who originally took up sections under the village-settlement tenure are not so advanced as one would expect considering the time they have been on the land.

The Avoca Special Settlement shows marked progress, and there is every indication that this settlement has a prosperous future before it, particularly now that a creamery has been established.

It is quite safe to predict that, given better means of access, all the districts inspected will thrive steadily.

In consequence of the large demand for timber and the necessity for measuring the same during the past year, I had not the opportunity of inspecting some 250 sections in Hobson and Otamatea Counties, but I have reason to believe that settlement there is steadily advancing, particularly in the Tokatoka district.

The establishment of butter-factories and creameries in the various districts has been so successful that it is confidently expected that their number will be increased next year. At present there are two butter-factories and six creameries in the Whangarei County, one factory and five creameries in the Hobson County, and one factory in Otamatea County.

Generally speaking, the various settlers appear to be hopeful for the future, as, owing to the better prices prevailing for stock and produce, the outlook is most encouraging.

Ranger Maxwell reports:—

*Mangonui County.*—The leases in Muriwhenua-Hohoura and Opoe Survey Districts are all small holdings, taken up for the reason that they are convenient to the extensive gumfields. The settlers have nearly all fulfilled the conditions of their leases, having built comfortable houses and made gardens, but have not otherwise cultivated their holdings to any extent. Most of them have a few head of cattle, but they entirely depend on the gumfields for a living.

The holdings in Ahipara, Awanui, and Mangatete are mostly poor land, some of them having been taken up for the gum they contained. A number of the lessees have not yet fulfilled the conditions of lease, but I believe will do so if given a little more time. The holdings are few in these districts. Except in one case the improvements are not extensive. The land in these districts is mostly very poor.

*Kaiaka-Takahue.*—The land in these localities is fairly good grass land. Kaiaka is wholly of a limestone formation, broken, but good grass land. The holdings are not large. With the exception of two or three the settlers are well up with their improvements. Some of the old settlers who have acquired the freehold of their land are making a good living off their holdings. The lessees still under my supervision have to spend a good deal of their time working on the gumfields and the roads to enable them to make a living. They seem to be satisfied with the quality