

of the land. In Takahue some of the old settlers have left. Those that remained are making fairly good progress, and are fairly well satisfied. The level land here is rather poor. The hills would grow good grass if the fern could be kept down.

*Rangaunu, Taipa, Mangonui, and Mangonui East.*—The holdings are very scattered, poor, and unremunerative. In a good many cases the lessees have not fulfilled conditions of improvements, owing, I think, to the inferior quality of the land. *Danthonia* seems to be taking good hold round the coast, about East Mangonui, which is a very poor district. The area of unoccupied Crown land is large but very poor, and can only be let in large areas at a low rental.

*Fern Flat, Maungataniwha.*—The people have built comfortable houses, making their living partly off the land—viz., working in the bush, on the road, and digging gum. Some of them have good stock.

*Whangaroa.*—The county is small; the area that can be brought under cultivation limited, and very broken. There are not many Crown leases in this county. With the exception of one or two, all have complied with the conditions of the lease. There is some very good grass land in the Parish of Matawherohia, but the area is small. I would like to call attention to the fact that the land is becoming covered with blackberry. There are hundreds of acres of land becoming quite unmanageable through this pest. In Waipapa, Kaeo, Matawherohia, and Pupuki Valleys there are places inaccessible to man or beast, and it is spreading over the range to Hokianga. It is mostly private and Native land that is infested. It is also on Crown lands. Some of the settlers keep it partly under with goats.

*Hokianga County.*—By far the most and best land for settlement purposes in my district is in this county.

*Herekino Settlement:* Of the many original settlers there are a few remaining, and some new settlers have come in. With the exception of four or five the settlers have done very little and barely kept up to the conditions of their leases. There is very little grass in the district considering the time the settlers have been there. Some of them—a small proportion—have made extensive improvements, but the majority have spent most of their time digging gum, and consequently neglected their sections. The place is now taking another start, and settlers taking fresh heart. They are doing more work on their sections, have considerable amount of stock, which do well, except that they lose a beast now and then with tupakihi, which is very plentiful there. The land is capable of producing good grass if fairly well managed. It is mostly broken, some fairly level. Sections are eagerly sought by intending settlers, and when there is a road fit for dray or wheel traffic from the head of tide-water in Awaroa to Herekino, and a boat can be induced to run to Whangape, the place will certainly go ahead. I would like to draw attention to the fact that Whangape is the best inlet to the Herekino lands, being a much safer harbour than Herekino and commanding more of the district.

*Whangape and Mangamuka.*—All bush. Nearly all good grass land. A good many settlers have from time to time gone to settle in Broadwood or Mangonuiwae, but most of them have left again. Those remaining are doing fairly well grazing cattle and running them in the bush. They have not much grass, but they have comfortable homes and a fair amount of fencing. The grass-seed given to the settlers to sow on Crown lands joining their sections is a failure owing to being nearly all overgrown with fern. A good many sections have recently been taken up. I have no hesitation in saying that the Motukaraka settlers and the few Crown tenants on the Mangamuka River are very favourably situated. They have a good outlet, and are doing well. They have a good deal of grass, and most of them have comfortable homes. They have stock which they take care to improve, and some of them have small vineries and orchards. I have seen finer fruit there than I have seen in any of the Auckland markets, especially grapes and peaches.

*Waoku and Hokianga.*—These settlements have advanced considerably during the last five years, a good deal of grass having been sown, a considerable amount of fencing having been erected, and a lot of very comfortable homes built. The settlers have a considerable amount of stock, which they mostly depend on for a living, and some of them have small orchards. They certainly have to get a little outside work to help them along, but most of them will be independent in a few years. Some of the settlers in the Waimamaku Valley have a considerable amount of kauri on their sections, which I believe they have agreed to sell to some sawmillers in the district.

*Punakitere.*—The people in this settlement have not got on as well as they should have done under the favourable circumstances in which they are situated. They have good roads, and are only a short distance from a navigable river. Some of them have good level land, the only fault being the land is wet, but there is a good outlet for drains. Notwithstanding, they have done very little draining, and have very little grass. The settlers own a good deal of stock, which they mostly run on the Native and waste Crown lands. The men spend most of their time on the gum-fields. There are some thrifty settlers in the place with comfortable homes, good fences, and orchards.

*Eastern or Upper Part of Waoku Survey District, between Taheke and Head of Waipoua.*—This block, which had a good many settlers on it at one time, is now quite abandoned. What bush had been felled is now entirely overgrown and impracticable to man or beast, and there is no grass left. The ground is very wet, the bush heavy, consisting of umu-muro-toro and whawaka. The damp air from the sea keeps the hills wet, and settlers cannot get a burn, though I believe that there are seasons when this bush could be burned.

*The Awatuna and Rangatira Blocks.*—Much the same as the last-stated. The settlers have got down a good deal of the bush, but they cannot get good burns. Some cannot get a burn at all, and grass will not take well. In many places the land is so heavily timbered that when felled it takes up most of the space, and there is very little left for grass, and it will be some time before the holdings can be made remunerative. Notwithstanding, I do not despair of this land; it has not been properly tried yet.