

all round the outlook is promising and the returns hitherto encouraging. The greatest drawback to a large area of this settlement exists in the want of a comprehensive drainage system. The formation of a Drainage Board has been freely canvassed, and has been before the settlers for several months, but nothing definite yet determined. I fear that unless matters are vigorously pushed on without delay the winter season will be allowed to come in before work is started, and another season may be lost. The separator-station erected at the homestead during the year has proved a great boon, not only to the Fencourt settlers but to other farmers in the vicinity. Its establishment has assisted to increase the output of milk, as people who prior to its erection were too far from the factory can now utilise this station with profit. The noxious-weed question is a matter requiring careful attention. Canadian thistle, blackberry, briar, and ragwort are to be seen, while, I regret to say, the thistle has taken possession of a considerable area on two selections and requires to be kept from seeding. Taking all surroundings into consideration, the settlement may be considered in a satisfactory condition, the returns for past season good, with the outlook for the future promising.

*Whitehall Settlement.*—Area, 8,959 acres. Number of selections, 8; number occupied, 7. Population, 23; increase for year, 1. Value of improvements effected during year, £810; total value of improvements, £2,087 8s. Number of milch cows, 40. Only two selectors milk for factory. Grazing is the principal source of revenue. Settlers now clearing and cultivating land for turnips and grass with fair results; land turning up better than anticipated. Better roads and erection of separator-station or factory, and more population required before the resources of settlement can be fully developed.

The Ranger reports: This settlement is progressing, but slowly. When opened for selection there was one section well improved and near factory; this has been subdivided, has now two separate homesteads upon it, and forty-five cows are milked for factory from section. None of the remainder of the estate is either within reach of a factory or sufficiently cultivated to permit dairying being followed, and the fact of the French Pass Road being blocked (the nearer route to Cambridge) is another drawback. It was anticipated last year that possibly a creamery-station might be put up within reach of the settlement. This has not occurred, so that grazing only has to be depended upon for returns, and this source is too slow and uncertain to suit struggling settlers. Some of the selectors are now commencing to break up land for root crops and then grass with fair results, the land giving better results than was anticipated; but closer settlement, more population, the establishment of a factory within reach of settlers, and better access to local market are required before the resources of the settlement can be taken advantage of and the slow progress at present evident altered. The settlers now on the land have so far effected good and substantial improvements with the evident intention of making homes, and although it will take some time yet, I am of opinion that eventually this settlement will come out right.

*Workmen's Homes.*—During the year five hamlets, comprising an area of 599 acres 1 rood 25 perches, divided into 197 sections varying in area from 1 acre to 39 acres, were thrown open for selection, of which twenty-four sections were taken up, but three surrendered during the year. The total value of improvements effected was £1,250. The number of people residing on sections is forty. The Kitchener, Methuen, and Cradock Hamlets are all situated at Avondale, six miles from Auckland, the nearest point to the railway-station being 20 chains and the furthest point 70 chains. Workmen's trains run regularly between Auckland and Avondale, and there is also a daily coach service from Auckland passing 4 chains from the nearest point.

*Hetana Hamlet.*—Containing an area of 408 acres 2 roods 25 perches divided into 123 sections. Number of selectors, 7; area, 31 acres 1 rood 19 perches. Number of houses, 6; persons resident, 24. Value of improvements, £581. The stock consists of five cows and six horses. The nearest part of the hamlet is 27 chains, and the furthest one mile and three quarters, from New Lynn Railway-station, eight miles from Auckland.

*Plumer Hamlet.*—Containing an area of 67 acres 1 rood 39 perches divided into nineteen sections, situated a quarter of a mile from Henderson Railway-station, fourteen miles from Auckland. Number of selectors, 3; area, 12 acres 3 roods 27 perches. Value of improvements effected, £10. Workmen's trains run regularly between Auckland and Henderson.

*Cradock Hamlet.*—Containing an area of 29 acres and 25 perches divided into fourteen sections, situated about a quarter of a mile from Avondale and six miles from Auckland. Number of selectors, 3; area, 7 acres and 10 perches. Total value of improvements effected, £20.

*Kitchener Hamlet.*—Containing an area of 22 acres 3 roods 14 perches divided into twelve sections, situated half a mile from Avondale Railway-station and six miles from Auckland. Number of selectors, 1; area, 2 acres.

*Methuen Hamlet.*—Containing an area of 71 acres and 32 perches divided into twenty-nine sections, situated a quarter of a mile from Avondale Railway-station, six miles from Auckland. Number of selectors, 7; area, 25 acres 2 roods 25 perches. Number of houses, 3; persons resident, 16. Total value of improvements, £639.

#### *Special-settlement Associations.*

*Otanake Settlement.*—An area of 5,761 acres, comprising twenty-nine sections, situated at Otanake Survey District, from eight to fifteen miles from Te Kuiti, was allotted during the year to the returned troopers, of which no inspection has yet been made.