

Settlement in fairly good position, and making steady and satisfactory progress; school and post-office established in settlement. Stock: 28 horses, 22 cows, 232 other cattle, and 1,405 sheep. Access: Towai metalled road to within two miles of settlement, remainder bridle-tracks good in summer only.

#### *Improved Farms.*

Mangatiti and Akitio Improved-farm Settlements have made steady progress. The selectors during the year have effected improvements at their own cost to the value of £1,239 1s. 7d.

Since last report a creamery has been erected at Mangatiti, also a butter-factory near Pongaroa, whilst the erection of branch establishments in suitable localities are under consideration.

The present drawback is the need of capital to provide sufficient stock and plant to enable selectors to take full advantage of their pasture and improvements.

In most instances bridle-tracks have been widened into dray-roads suitable for summer traffic, whilst schools and post-offices are within easy reach of the majority.

Summary: Of sixty-eight required to reside, fifty-seven are residing, as are also thirty-two women and 105 children. The non-residents, eight single and three married men, appear in settlement report attached.

The improvements are as follows: At Government cost—3,459 acres of bush felled, £4,877 8s. 3d.; 2,665 acres grassed, £1,376 13s. 4d.; buildings, &c., £729 15s.: totals—for 1903, £6,983 16s. 7d.; for 1902, £6,539 5s. 5d.; showing an increase for 1903 of £444 11s. 2d. At settlers' cost—1,004½ acres of bush felled, £1,473 8s.; 1,653½ acres grassed, £978 11s. 10d.; houses (fifty-six), £964; outbuildings, gardens, &c., £449 13s.; fencing (2,460 chains), £2,016 5s. 3d.: totals—for 1903, £5,881 18s. 1d.; for 1902, £4,642 16s. 6d.; showing an increase for 1903 of £1,239 1s. 7d. The total improvements for the year amount to £1,683 12s. 9d. over that of last year (1902).

Stock: 1903—76 horses, 278 cows, 658 other cattle, 3,226 sheep, and 63 pigs. 1902—72 horses, 184 cows, 417 other cattle, 2,598 sheep, and 59 pigs. Increase—4 horses, 94 cows, 241 other cattle, 628 sheep, and 4 pigs.

From the above will be seen the cost of Government improvements and the nature, extent, and value of improvements effected at selectors' cost, with the number and kind of stock, also the increase as compared with previous years.

*Mangatiti.*—Situating in Makuri, Puketoi, Aohanga, and Mount Cerberus districts. Area, 4,548 acres, divided into thirty holdings, held by thirty-one selectors, ranging from 65 to 200 acres, averaging about 150 acres each. Of thirty-one required to reside, fifteen married men, with their wives and thirty-six children, and eleven single men are residing. Of the five non-resident, two are married and three are single; of the former, one resides occasionally, and one is supposed to be visiting his family in the South Island. The remainder are expected to comply shortly, as one is working at local saw-mill and two are recent selectors. Cost of Government improvements—1903, £3,083 11s. 11d.; 1902, £2,872 2s. 1d.: increase, £211 9s. 10d. Value of selectors' improvements—1903, £2,196 19s. 7d.; 1902, £1,405 6s. 3d.: increase, £791 13s. 4d. Stock—1903, 33 horses, 150 cows, 348 other cattle, 158 sheep, and 25 pigs; 1902, 32 horses, 64 cows, 271 other cattle, 222 sheep, and 13 pigs. In 1903 there were thirteen women and thirty-six children residing, and in 1902 there were eleven women and thirty-three children. The improvements effected by selectors are as follows: 284 acres of bush felled, £410 18s. 6d.; 563 acres grassed, £320 19s. 4d.; twenty-three buildings, £563; 924½ chains fencing, £741 13s. 4d.; 17 acres garden and cultivation, &c., £160 8s.: total, £2,196 17s. 7d. The selectors are mostly struggling industrious labouring-men; some few, with the assistance of a little work at their callings, obtain a living on their holdings, but the majority rely upon Government road-work. During the year the resident and especially the married selectors have effected improvements at their own cost to the value of £791 13s. 4d., whilst seven have no fencing and ten have no stock, being a reduction since last report of three and five respectively, whilst three are new and promising settlers; so better results may be expected this coming year. Access mostly by summer dray-roads.

*Akitio.*—Situating in Mount Cerberus and Weber districts, but mostly in parts of Pahiatua Nos. 1, 2, and 3 Farm-homestead Blocks. Area, 4,324 acres, divided into thirty-seven holdings, ranging from 60 to 200 acres, averaging about 117 acres each. Of thirty-seven required to reside, eleven single and twenty married men are residing, also nineteen women and sixty-nine children; one married and five single men are not residing. Of the six non-resident, one married (transfer pending) and one single man are working in adjoining district, the remaining five are young and single men who participate in Government road-work and reside mostly in the locality with their relatives. Cost of Government improvements—1903, £3,900 4s. 8d.; 1902, £3,666 17s. 4d.: increase, £233 7s. 4d. Value of settlers' improvements—1903, £3,684 18s. 6d.; 1902, £3,237 10s. 3d.: increase, £447 8s. 3d. Stock—1903, 43 horses, 128 cows, 315 other cattle, 3,060 sheep, and 38 pigs; 1902, 40 horses, 120 cows, 146 other cattle, 2,376 sheep, and 41 pigs. In 1903 there were nineteen women and sixty-nine children residing, and in 1902 there were eighteen women and forty-eight children. Improvements effected by selectors are as follows: 760½ acres of bush felled, £1,062 9s. 6d.; 1,070 acres grassed, £657 12s. 6d.; thirty-three houses, £401; 1,535½ chains fencing, £1,275 11s. 6d.; outbuildings, yards, &c., £289 5s.: total, £3,685 18s. 6d. The selectors are mostly struggling industrious labouring-men; some few work almost exclusively on their sections, but the major portion works on sections, roads, and about the district, whilst a few rely chiefly on Government road-work. Good progress has been made during the year, the resident and especially the married selectors having effected improvements at their own cost to the value of £477 8s. 3d. The non-resident, mostly single men, have not made any noticeable improvement. Of six single men who have no stock, three are resident and three are non-resident; and of five who have no fencing, four are resident and one non-resident. Access mostly summer dray-roads.