

made under section 80 of "The Land Laws Amendment Act, 1907." The disposal of this estate having been so recent, particulars as to buildings, population, stock, and cropping are not yet forthcoming. The Ranger states as follows: "This estate has just been settled, and it is too soon to say anything about the prospects of the settlers. At the present time a good many of the settlers are residing on the land, and all are busy erecting buildings and fencing. A good many miles of the latter have already been put up, all of a substantial character. Many of the settlers are now ploughing and preparing the land for the coming season. The displenishing sale at Otekaike enabled those with the larger holdings to stock up with sheep bred on the spot, so that they are more likely to do well than sheep brought from outside the district. With good seasons Otekaike should prove a very good settlement."

Taumata (Ashley Downs).—Established March, 1908. Area, 3,700 acres. Holdings, 9, over 3,687 acres, at £833 6s. per annum. This land having been so recently taken up, it is too early to report as to progress being made. There is, however, good reason for believing that it will be a successful settlement.

Meadowbank.—This settlement was opened on the 22nd and balloted for on the 25th April, the total occupation area of 4,343 acres being taken up in eight holdings, at an annual rental of £890 5s. 10d. It does not, however, come within the transactions for the year 1907–8.

Summary.—The following is a summary of particulars in respect of these settlements, omitting Meadowbank:—

Number of settlements	..	..	..	..	..	26
Total area acquired	..	..	..	..	..	178,883 acres.
Total number of holdings	..	..	..	..	..	709
Area occupied	..	..	..	..	..	169,964 acres.
Annual rent of occupied area	..	..	..	..	..	£42,366 12s.
Unlet area	..	..	..	..	..	6,775 acres.
Annual value of unlet area	..	..	..	..	..	£357 18s. 3d.
Receipts for the year	..	..	..	..	..	£37,185 11s. 8d.
Total receipts from inception	..	..	..	..	..	£228,832 10s. 11d.
Rebates granted during year, to 531 tenants	..	..	..	..	..	£2,930 8s. 5d.
Arrears owing by thirty tenants, holding 4,997 acres	..	..	..	..	..	£907 9s. 2d.
Total population	..	..	..	..	..	1,821
Number of houses	..	..	..	..	..	485
„ sheep	..	..	..	..	..	65,512
„ cattle	..	..	..	..	..	5,091
„ horses	..	..	..	..	..	1,973
„ pigs	..	..	..	..	..	858
Area in new grass	..	..	..	..	..	7,903 acres.
„ white crops	..	..	..	..	..	18,379½ „
„ green crops	..	..	..	..	..	9,456 „
„ native grass, &c.	..	..	..	..	..	22,423 „
Total value of improvements now on the ground	..	..	..	..	..	£150,616.

D. BARRON,
Commissioner of Crown Lands.

SOUTHLAND

Merrivale Settlement.—The whole of this settlement is under lease by forty-nine selectors, who have made good and substantial improvements. The past season has been a favourable one, and the crops have been good. Very few of the lessees now require to take outside work, and but five of them are in arrear with rent, to the amount of £79 12s. 8d., which is £181 11s. 4d. less than the arrears of last year. There are 150 persons residing. Dairying and mixed farming are the principal occupations of the settlers. The total number of stock upon the settlement is 6,174. The total value of the improvements effected is £10,691 5s.

Otahu Settlement.—No change has occurred during the year in the holdings on this settlement. There are six selectors upon it, holding 5,954 acres; number of residents, thirteen. There are no arrears of rent. The total value of improvements effected is £1,753 10s. which is slightly under the amount required, but the inferior character of the land will account for this. The number of stock is 2,563. The Ranger reports that owing to the dry season the turnip-crops on some of the holdings are almost a failure. The oat-crops were short and thin. The success of the settlers is only a matter of time, although the land is inferior. The Ranger is of opinion that if it were possible to irrigate the whole of the settlement there would be a vast improvement.

Beaumont Settlement.—One new selection, of 257 acres, was made during the year. The tenants number twelve, and the total of the residents thirty-three; the area held being 4,462 acres. The value of improvements effected is £1,973 14s., which is about £600 below the required amount. The total number of stock is 1,717. The Ranger reports that the settlers seem to be more satisfied with their holdings than formerly, and that they understand the nature of the soil and its requirements better. He thinks they will now be able to live comfortably upon the land. He states that the improvements made are of a substantial character. Five lessees are in arrear for £171 18s. 1d., which is £32 less than last year.