

*Starborough Settlement.*—Area, 35,906 acres. Purchased in 1899. This settlement is situated on the right bank of the Awatere River, and also has a frontage on to the sea-coast. The general character of this estate is good agricultural and pastoral land, and, including the Township of Seddon, it is held by 196 holders. There are 100 houses, in which 409 persons reside. This is exclusive of nine houses situated on public reserves. The total value of improvements required by the Act is £19,124; effected, £55,753. Number of sheep carried, 35,893; cattle, 148; horses, 353; pigs, about 40. White crops, 2,965 acres; green crops, 1,614 acres; land laid down in permanent grass, 8,720 acres. The average yield from the white crop—chiefly barley and oats—over the whole of the estate must have been considerably below last year's returns; but some of the early-sown crops were good, and, with the high prices ruling, must have been satisfactory to the owners of them. The pastoral aspect, however, is far from being so encouraging, owing to the unprecedented length and severity of the spring and summer droughts, all the grass being dried up, and, as the rape and turnip crops were practically a failure, the prospect for the stock is rather gloomy unless we have an exceptionally fine and mild winter.

*Richmond Brook Settlement.*—Area, 5,854 acres. Situated on the right bank of the Awatere River, about six miles above the railway-crossing. This estate was settled in 1899. It is chiefly good pastoral country with some good flats and downs, upon which was grown last year 734 acres of white and 577 acres of green crops; cultivated grass, about 2,850 acres. The estate carries 7,060 sheep, 31 head of cattle, 76 horses, and 7 pigs. The block is divided into eleven holdings, held by eleven tenants, all of whom reside on the estate, and live in ten houses. Total number resident, 53 persons. This is a very successful little settlement, and, despite the unusually dry and trying season, the settlers are, I think, doing well, and have a reasonable prospect of doing much better if favoured by more suitable climatic conditions.

*Waipapa Settlement.*—Situated on the right bank of the Clarence River, within about two miles and a half from the sea-coast. Area, 3,755 acres. Purchased in 1901. Divided into four holdings, held by four persons living in four houses, in which twenty-one persons reside. This block is a strip of generally flat land along the river-frontage, has not been marked on the ground, and is merged in the grazing-runs of Crown lands, and worked with them. It is, therefore, not possible to estimate the amount of improvements effected or the number of stock carried. Forty-five acres of white crops and 86 acres of green crops have been grown on the flat land, which is of excellent quality. The prospects are good, for, although the drought was felt a little there, it was very slight in comparison with the other estates further north. The settlers have much to contend with in the shape of rabbits, &c., and being far from markets for fat stock.

*North Bank Settlement.*—Situated on the left bank of the Wairau River, about twenty-five miles above Blenheim. Area, 12,895 acres. Selected in 1901 in seven holdings by eight persons, who are all living on their sections. Number of persons residing, thirty-six, in six houses. Sheep on the estate, 3,390; cattle, 24; horses, 56; pigs, 3. Number of acres in white crops, 112; root-crops, 57 acres; in grass, 680 acres. This estate is rather poor dry land, and the settlers have a great deal to contend with in the briar, blackberry, and other noxious weeds, and in preventing their holdings from reverting to fern and scrub.

*Rainford Settlement.*—This is a small block of 246 acres, situated within about four miles of the Township of Kaikoura, and about two miles from a very prosperous cheese-factory. The land is all first-class dairying country. Taken up by eleven selectors, only nine of whom are now residing permanently on the estate; there are forty-four persons residing in nine houses. The stock consists of 25 sheep, 116 cattle, 34 horses, and 16 pigs. There were, last year, 19 acres in green crops. The value of improvements effected was £1,971. The holdings on the estate are very small, but the land is very good, and the settlers appear to be doing well. The estate is abundantly well watered, and has suffered very little from the drought.

*Flaxbourne Settlement.*—This estate has a frontage on the east coast between the Ure River and Cape Campbell, and also on Lake Grassmere, and contains 46,598 acres. It was opened for selection in 1905. Of the 106 holdings, ninety-eight are lease in perpetuity, held by eighty-four persons, of whom sixty-three are residing and twenty-one not complying with the residential conditions: these are mostly small holdings, not large enough to support the holders entirely, and they have to go afield for employment; it is hoped that when the railway is completed to the settlement a large number of these may become permanent residents. There are eighteen small grazing-runs on the estate: all the holders are residing, and all but three have complied with the improvement conditions, and it is anticipated that these will be up to the statutory requirements next year. There are also twenty-five miscellaneous leaseholds on Flaxbourne, upon which have been built four houses, in which seventeen persons reside. The number of houses on the estate is eighty-four, and 299 persons were residing in them at the end of the year. In addition to these there is a floating population of about twenty persons engaged in the flax-work and other industrial pursuits. The total number of sheep on the estate is 40,599; cattle, 856; horses, 317; and about 36 pigs. The total area of cultivated land is—under white crops, 1,644 acres; green crops, 1,631 acres; cultivated grass, 5,586 acres; the balance being in native grass (surface-sown), plantations, gardens, &c. The total value of the required improvements is £15,887 3s. 6d.; improvements effected £30,316. This estate suffered a great deal by the phenomenally dry season, which not only greatly injured the crops of barley, oats, &c., but almost destroyed the rape and turnip crops, and burnt up the other feed. Some of the early crops were fairly good, but the prospect of feed for the winter is very gloomy unless we have a mild season. Notwithstanding these drawbacks, the settlers are making considerable improvements, and have a good prospect of doing well if they get better climatic conditions than they had last year.

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