

north into the prominence which its true value merits. Many visitors from other parts of the Dominion have purchased land and settled in the north, and the capital which they brought with them has contributed materially to the prosperity of the district. The extension of the East Coast Railway will also prove a great factor in assisting the development of the district southwards of the Bay of Plenty.

Settlers occupying bush lands have been handicapped this year by the early autumn rains, which rendered it impossible to get good burns; those who burnt early were, however, rewarded with very favourable conditions for sowing. Crops generally have been good, and notwithstanding the variable season were successfully harvested. The dairying industry throughout the district has had a very successful year, as is evidenced by the fact that the total quantity of butter exported amounted to 140,601 cwt., as against 125,450 cwt. for the preceding year, an increase of 12 per cent., while the higher values realized represent an increase of over 25 per cent. The cheese export also shows an increase of 16 per cent. in quantity. The development of home separation in connection with the dairy industry, especially to those in the backblocks, is proving of great advantage, as it enables them to pack their cream and thus bring the dairy industry within reach of those who would otherwise be debarred from its benefits. The development of dairying is also bringing about an improvement in the quality of stock. In this connection it is interesting to note that dairying is being found to reduce to some extent the "bush sickness" prevalent in parts of the Tauranga and other counties. The changing of stock and bringing in of new stock prevents the rank growth of pasture, and minimizes the effect of the disease.

In the district southward of the Bay of Plenty good progress is being made by the tenants, though some in the Opotiki County are hampered by difficulties of access, due in part to the steep and broken nature of the country. The drainage-works undertaken by the Government at Matata and Rangitaiki have proved of great benefit to the surrounding district, and it is possible that similar works may be needed in the swamp near Maketu and similar areas in other parts of the district. The settlement of Native lands near Rotorua and the progress of dairying is aiding the development of that locality. The pumice soils are being found capable of responding to suitable treatment.

In the Coromandel Peninsula the most serious drawback is the difficulty of getting the lands settled under present conditions. Thousands of acres of unoccupied lands are becoming seriously overrun with noxious weeds, especially blackberry. Much of the land, though poor and rough, could be successfully occupied for sheep and cattle grazing, and if a sufficiently attractive form of tenure could be offered would in all probability be taken up readily.

A portion of the Waihi Plains close to the Township of Waihi was successfully disposed of during the year, and a considerable area of undulating country northward from Waihi, if suitably opened up, might be utilized for dairy farms.

On the Hauraki Plains great development is taking place on the lands already disposed of, and excellent work is being done by the tenants, who are generally complying with the terms of their leases in a very satisfactory manner.

IMPROVED-FARM SETTLEMENTS.

Rangitoto No. 1: This settlement has made good progress; out of the forty selectors, thirty-seven are residing with their families, the total number of souls being 161. The area under cultivation is 1,005 acres, and the value of improvements effected is £5,129. Two schools have been opened during the year.

Rangitoto No. 2: All the selectors, seventeen in number, are residing with their families, numbering sixty-two persons. The area under cultivation is 761 acres, and the value of improvements £3,147. A school has been opened, and several settlers are milking for the factory.

Korakonui: There are fifteen selectors, all of whom are residing, the total population being fifty-four persons. 462 acres have been brought under cultivation, and the value of improvements effected is £2,405. Dairying has been commenced, and a school is established on the settlement.

To make these settlements a complete success, further assistance is required for another year. The members of the Land Board and myself have recently visited nearly all these settlers, and generally speaking found them of a suitable type, satisfied with their holdings, and doing their best to make homes for themselves and their families. In a few cases the selectors and the holdings might be separated with mutual advantage, but with judicious elimination of the unfit the settlements should be able to stand the test imposed by the cessation of advances, and should ultimately prove successful.

REVENUE.

The gross revenue for the year was £170,580 17s. 11d., as against £130,795 11s. 7d. for the preceding year, an increase of £39,785 6s. 4d.; the principal increases being in the items of timber sales, cash sales, and acquisition of freehold, Native Land Settlement Account, and the educational endowment reserves, the control of which was taken over from the School Commissioners at the beginning of the year.

The report furnished by the Receiver of Land Revenue on the work of the year shows that, in addition to the collection of the above-mentioned revenue, which involved the issue of 13,482 receipts, a sum of £83,766 was paid into Ordinary Deposit Account, the payments from which amounted to £85,853, the receipts issued and operations effected on this account numbering 6,685. The amount of "thirds," "fourths," and "halves" paid into the Local Bodies' Deposit Account was £18,634, and £18,139 was paid out of this account. The number of book-keeping entries involved in dealing with these large sums of money was approximately 117,000. During the year new ledgers have been opened for all accounts, and a double-entry system of book-keeping is now being maintained.