

"Thanks to the home-separator system, the dairy industry has been considerably extended in the district, with the result that there will be a considerable increase in the exports of butter for the season. The quantity of wool sent out also shows a very large increase on last year.

"New schools have been opened at Whenuakura and Waitaanga, and the telephone system extended from Mangaroa as far as Mr. Barnett's residence on the Waitewhenua Road."

The Ranger for the central and southern portion of the Land District reports as follows:—

"Owing to the very wet weather which has prevailed during the year, the progress of my district has not been as great as it would have been with moderate seasons. The bush that was felled during the winter months had no chance to dry, and bad burns was the general cry, only those settlers who burnt during a short spell of dry weather in the early part of the season being successful in getting good burns. In the more open country where grass is plentiful, the dairy farmers have done very well, and prosperity seems the order of the day. Prices for butter have kept up and are bringing the farmers a good return, though with the increased values placed upon any land suitable for dairy purposes, and the high price that good cows are fetching, it takes some of the farmers all their time to make a living. This, I think, will prove not altogether an unmixed blessing, as it will force the farmers to go in for more intense farming so as to enable the land to carry more stock, and will eventually produce a farming community who will understand the proper tilling of the soil and bring it up to its greatest producing-power.

"The roads other than those that are metalled have been in a very bad state and in some cases have been almost impassable. The railway-line has been pushed on and is now very near to Whangamomona, or about thirty-seven miles from Stratford. This will alleviate the traffic on the Whangamomona Saddle, and will give the road a chance of drying up before the winter sets in.

"The lambing in my district was not a great success owing to the cold and wet weather.

"Through the movement of stock to other districts they have become very scarce; high prices are likely to prevail for all classes of dairy stock."

With the extending of the telephone into several outlying places, the addition to or erection of new schools, and the pushing-on of widening of roads, the settlers in the back country are being brought more in touch with civilization every year.

GRASS-SEED.

Forty-nine promissory notes given in 1908 by sufferers from bush-fires for grass-seed supplied to them matured during March, 1912, to the total value of £617 7s. 3d., and twenty-four of these have been met, the amount paid being £319 18s. 1d. The sum of £354 1s. 9d. has been received during the year.

ARREARS OF RENT.

The amount owing has increased considerably during last year, being more than in any of the past three years. It is possible that the peculiar season we have experienced this year had its effect upon the farming community, the shearing operations being very late, which would consequently delay the returns from the wool-clip. The greater proportion of the amounts due on ordinary Crown land, exclusive of the current instalment, was owing by a few tenants; and the rents of education endowments being in most cases payable at the end of a half-year, many of them falling due on the 1st April, is the reason for the large amount appearing in the tables.

EXPENDITURE OF "THIRDS," "FOURTHS," AND "HALVES."

Thirty-two proposals for expenditure of £7,274 3s. 4d. were approved by the Land Board, a satisfactory increase on last year's operations. The amount at credit of the Deposit Account of the Receiver of Land Revenue on the 31st March, 1912, was £6,430 1s. 5d.

FORFEITURES AND SURRENDERS.

These took place amongst the more recent selections, and unless all applicants for land are subjected to a personal examination as to their fitness and financial resources it is likely that a certain proportion of them will be found unsuitable, belonging to the class who select land in ignorance of the work required to bring it into profit, and more as a venture.

DISPOSAL OF REMAINING CROWN LANDS.

There is every reason to anticipate that the following blocks, or portions thereof, will be offered during the year 1912-13:—

In the Mapara and Tangitu Survey Districts, nine sections, 4,101 acres of good forest country, situated from eight to seventeen miles from Waimiha Railway-station.

Whakaihuwaka B Block (6,912 acres), in Kaipara and Tua Survey Districts, adjoining the boundary between the Taranaki and Wellington Land Districts, and extending from that boundary to the Rawhitiroa State Forest. Situate about thirty-five miles from Waitotara Railway-station.

Part Whakaihuwaka A Block (about 13,000 acres), in Taurakawa Survey District, to the south-east of the settled land at the head of the Puniwhakau Valley, and comprising the headwaters of the Waitotara River.

Aratawa, Mangapukatea, and Raoraomouku Blocks (12,334 acres), adjoining the Wanganui River above Pipiriki, and extending westerly. The stock route to this block will be *via* Puniwhakau Valley and a road to be constructed round the north side of Mount Humphries.

Part Taumatamahoe 2B No. 2A Block (about 7,000 acres), abutting on the Wanganui River, lying along the Whangamomona Valley westward to the settled country in Mahoe Survey District. This