

block will be reached from Whangamomona Railway-station *via* Whangamomona Valley and Tahunarua Roads. There is already a bridle-track about two miles into this block, and work is proceeding.

Whatitokarua Block (about 17,000 acres), lying to the north-west of Taumarunui Railway-station, and extending in that direction to the Ohura Road. The railway-route from Stratford has been deviated through portion of this block, and it will be necessary to reserve from sale for the time being the portion immediately affected by the road and railway construction-works.

Mangaiti Block (about 8,800 acres), in Mapara Survey District, lying to the west of Waimiha and Paritikona Railway-stations.

Haupeehi Block (about 6,400 acres), in Mapara Survey District, recently purchased by the Crown, it having previously been subdivided by the Maori Land Board for settlement purposes.

IMPROVED-FARM SETTLEMENTS.

No new settlement under the improved-farm settlement conditions has taken place this year, but the Mapara and Tangitu Settlements, established in 1909, are progressing very well.

In the Tangitu Settlement the schedule of improvements effected shows a satisfactory state of affairs in that way, and willingness in the settlers to improve their lands. Owing to the bad weather of the past season, the burns as a rule are not good, and this may handicap the settlers later on. Last season's take of grass goes to prove the fertility of the soil. The settlers are generally in good heart. Three post-offices have been established, served by bi-weekly mails, and shortly by tri-weekly; and a telephone-line to Tangitu is proposed. Three tent schools with average attendance of about thirty-five have been established by the Auckland Education Board, and the members of the Land Board were struck by the healthy and intelligent appearance of the children. There are about nine hundred head of cattle in the settlement, the clearings in which could carry more. Given good roads the success of this settlement should shortly be assured; and, speaking from personal observation, the land is turning out even better than I thought when exploring it a few years ago. Out of eighty-six settlers, seventy-eight are now residing with their families; of the eight residing without their families, five are preparing for them, two were only allotted their sections last season, and the remaining one will be on the ground very shortly, so that there are really no defaulters.

The Mapara Settlement has also made good progress, and quite a number of the settlers have obtained their leases, and some have milked sufficient cows to keep themselves and families for the season. Substantial improvements have been made during the year, and the Land Board during its recent visit was pleased with the general appearance of the settlement and the amount of land that had been ploughed. Though not taking grass so well as bush country, the open fern country, after shallow ploughing and some amount of fallowing, takes grass fairly well, but will need successive cultivation to get rid of the fern. The sections are all roaded, but the completion of the Kahuwera Road would give the settlers more direct communication with the butter-factory at Piopio. These settlers are all residing, and the majority have erected substantial dwellings. The Auckland Education Board has a tent school in the settlement, and, I understand, contemplate erecting a schoolhouse shortly. A post-office has been established, and a telephone-wire is being erected. Evidence of the success of these settlements is the willingness of the banks to finance the settlers as soon as they can obtain their leases.

LAND BOARD.

The Board held twelve ordinary meetings, and during March made an inspection of the Mapara and Tangitu Improved-farm Settlements.

OFFICE-WORK.

This has steadily increased during the year, a great deal arising from the administration and registration of the improved-farm settlements. The correspondence inwards and outwards, circulars, applications, parcels, &c., was 25,153; cheques drawn, 1,146; vouchers, 1,400; transfers, 232; receipts for rent, refunds, &c., 4,607; provisional titles issued, 32; a total of 32,570.

I have to thank the staff for their cheerful and willing assistance, which has been of great value to me, coming here at the close of the year after the sudden death of the late Mr. Armstrong, whom I did not know personally, but who gained the esteem and goodwill of those in contact with him. I consider myself fortunate in being at the head of such a competent office-staff, whose organization reflects credit on my predecessors.

G. H. BULLARD,
Commissioner of Crown Lands.

WELLINGTON.

The following report was drawn up by the late Commissioner of Crown Lands for the district (Mr. James Mackenzie), who retired from that position at the close of the year, in consequence of his promotion to the Surveyor-Generalship:—

LAND OPENED FOR SALE AND SELECTION.

The total area of Crown lands offered during the year was 29,853 acres. This, added to the land open for application on the 1st April, 1911—viz., 1,616 acres—made a total of 31,469 acres available publicly for selection. The lands offered comprised principally 21,535 acres in the South Waimarino (Morinui) Block; 5,046 acres in the Awarua Block; village homesteads in Manunui, Ohakune, and