

DEPARTMENTAL.

The volume of departmental work involved in the carrying-on of the administration of the district has been very much increased by the taking-over of the late School Commissioners' endowments, which are now under the control and management of this Department. The period under review has been a year of strenuous work for the whole of the staff, the amount of business being greatly in excess of any previous year. I have much pleasure in recording my appreciation of the way the officers have worked and the willingness with which they have assisted me since taking charge of the district in December last.

G. H. M. McCLURE,
Commissioner of Crown Lands.

APPENDIX II.—LAND FOR SETTLEMENTS (EXTRACTS FROM REPORTS OF COMMISSIONERS OF CROWN LANDS ON).

AUCKLAND.

THE reports received from the Crown Lands Ranger on the rural settlements are generally of a very satisfactory character. The majority of the settlers are devoting their attention to dairying, creameries having been established in or adjoining the settlements, and the amount of cropping done is not great, though good results have been obtained from the crops put in. The introduction of milking-machines, erection of public halls, establishment of schools, &c., are evidences of an energy and intelligence which are bound to lead to well-deserved prosperity not only to the settlers immediately concerned, but also to the districts in which they are located. In the older settlements comfortable homesteads and surroundings have developed, the roads are in good order, and the general appearance is one of comfort and prosperity.

In the Tautari Settlement road-improvement will become necessary before long, and telephone communication is much needed.

In the Selwyn Settlement, although much of it consists of light land, the settlers appear to be doing well, and there is a tendency to subdivide the larger holdings, which indicates that settlers find the land responsive to suitable treatment, and realize that a smaller area developed to its full productiveness is more remunerative than a larger area that cannot be brought into the fullest use. Root crops and clovers appear to do well when judiciously treated with artificial manures.

The Township of Matamata (in the settlement of that name), Te Awamutu (Teasdale Settlement), and Putaruru (Selwyn Settlement) are thriving agricultural centres.

The suburban settlements near Auckland, six in number, are in a very satisfactory and prosperous condition; the dwellinghouses and other improvements are of a good description, and many of the holders are establishing orchards and poultry-farms with considerable success.

H. M. SKEET,
Commissioner of Crown Lands.

HAWKE'S BAY.

The settlers in the northern portion of the Hawke's Bay Land District under the land-for-settlement conditions have had another successful year. The settlers on Wigan, Ngatapa, and Kanakanaia go in particularly for grazing; on Te Arai, mixed farming, dairying, cropping, and grazing are carried on; and on Pouparae, Willows, and Waimarie they go in principally for dairying and cropping.

It has been an exceptionally good winter for stock. All the sheep clipped exceptionally well, and the wool was in beautiful order, much heavier than the last few years, and the prices realized by the settlers have been very satisfactory. The lambing has been above the average for this district, and the lambs have fattened well. It is the general opinion that hoggets have never done better in this district. Big sheep also fattened well, and one settler on Kanakanaia sent 1,600 fat sheep to the freezing-works this season.

The dry season was felt more by the settlers who go in for dairying, but the prices received for butter-fat was a record for this district, and practically compensated them for the shortness in supply. Generally speaking, it has not been a good year for fat cattle. The stock came through the winter in splendid condition, but both the spring and summer being dry it was hard to top them off.

The season also has not been very favourable for cropping, as the rain came too late to do the crops much good. There is a shortage of maize in the district, consequently prices have been ruling much higher than in previous years. There has been a much larger area in oats this year, but no heavy crops, though the quality is first class, and it has been the best season for chaff for some considerable time.