

Dairying Industry.—Thirteen butter-factories and creameries are now in operation, and the value of the industry is approaching £100,000 per annum. About nine thousand cows are supplying the factories.

Coal Industry.—Two mines in the Collingwood County are producing coal, while another is being developed and is expected to be working in about six months. Generally speaking, the industry will not expand to any extent, as the coal is not in large enough quantities to build up an export trade, and all mined can be consumed in and around Nelson. The revenue this year is some £3,000 behind last year's figures, but last year's revenue included about £4,000 of arrears owing from last period, so that actually there was an increase of revenue from this source.

MARLBOROUGH.

(H. G. PRICE, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

The district has again experienced another dry year, which has been more particularly felt in the southern part, and materially affected the crops, but not to such an extent as the previous year. A good deal of wheat and barley was sown on Starborough, Flaxbourne, and Blind River Settlements, but the return was below the average. In the northern part of the district the drought has not been so bad, consequently the crops have been fair and in many instances good. The dairying industry is also increasing in this part of the district, and there is a keen demand for any suitable land for this class of farming. The settlers on the Tunakino Block that was opened during the year have been busy felling their bush, and those on the Opouri Block adjoining, which was opened the previous year, have felled and grassed a fair area, so in a few years' time there will be a considerable dairying industry in this locality. Lucerne-growing is more extensively gone in for, the settlers recognizing that it is one of the most useful and profitable crops; a fair area of peas is also grown in the district. Stock have brought a fair price, especially cattle. Generally speaking, the settlers throughout the district have had a better year than the previous one, especially those in the northern part of the district, who have done well, and with the return of normal weather-conditions the prospects of settlement throughout the district will considerably improve.

Lands offered for Selection.—The total area opened for sale or selection during the year was 51,013 acres, which was all taken up.

Lands to be opened.—There will only be a small area of about 1,200 acres of Crown land in the Ronga and Rai Valleys opened for selection. There is about 5,900 acres in the Upper Opouri Valley now under survey, but will not be available till the milling-timber is cut out. Although there is a considerable area of Crown land in this district unselected, yet the greater part of it is rough bush country, principally birch; homestead-sites and road access generally are difficult to obtain, and in many cases a large percentage of it can only be worked to advantage by adjoining owners who already hold the frontage and homestead-sites.

Flax Industry.—There has been more activity in this industry owing to the high prices ruling.

Mining Industry.—With the exception of the Golden Bar Mine at the Wakamarina, from which the returns of gold and scheelite continue satisfactory, there is not much doing in the district, although there has been more prospecting going on. There has also been some activity in prospecting for antimony in the Endeavour Inlet and Queen Charlotte Sound.

Land Board.—The Land Board held twelve ordinary and two special meetings, and two tours of inspection were made to different parts of the district during the year. In only a few instances has it been necessary to exercise the provisions of the Land Laws Amendment Act of 1915, but no doubt as cases arise it will be taken advantage of.

WESTLAND.

(W. F. MARSH, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

The season has been particularly favourable to farming operations, and this, combined with the high prices offering for products, especially butter and cheese, has substantially enhanced the profit to farmers. The output of dairy-produce has steadily increased year by year since the inception of factories, and the very satisfactory progress made has been more than maintained in the past twelve months, with the result that the district generally, more particularly in the vicinity of the factories, bears every evidence of a healthy improvement, and the prospects for continued prosperity are decidedly bright.

The recent drought in Canterbury has given Westland the opportunity of conclusively proving its exceptional advantages in the business of successful cattle-raising. Various local pastoralists have been progressive enough to place their surplus fat stock upon the Christchurch markets, and the prices obtained therefrom have been sufficiently remunerative to cause a keen demand from the Canterbury buyers for land in this district and a willingness to pay in excess of the prices hitherto ruling. At the same time it must be added that, doubtless owing to its present isolation, values in Westland are considerably below those for similar classes of land in other parts of the Dominion. There is no doubt a good future before the West Coast for cattle-raising and