

APPENDIX.

REPORTS OF COMMISSIONERS OF CROWN LANDS.

NORTH AUCKLAND.

(R. P. GREVILLE, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

THE following settlements were opened during the year :—

The Koremoa Settlement, situated on the Northern Wairoa, containing 2908 acres, and subdivided into fourteen sections, of which thirteen have been selected. The land in this settlement was of two classes—flat and highly improved land, purchased from Mr. O'Connor, and cut into areas of from 30 to 40 acres, and an area of Crown land, formerly a kauri-gum reserve, consisting of swamp and poor hill country. Most of the holdings were arranged so that the settler had a portion of rich flat and a portion of the hills, which would eventually be useful as a run-off for his dry stock. Four of the sections had no areas of cultivated land, but had areas of swamp land, which will become valuable when drained and brought into cultivation, besides which the land contains deposits of kauri-gum of considerable value. Most of the settlers on the block are doing very well, and up to the end of the year had nearly all fulfilled their obligations. The members of the Land Board have visited this settlement, and I have visited it on two or three occasions. It was decided to recommend a remission of rent on the Crown-land sections for two years, until such time as the land can be brought into use. The drainage of the swamp has been taken in hand by the Land Drainage Department, and it is proposed to offer the work to some of the settlers on the block. Considering the short time the settlement has been in existence the soldiers have made a very good showing, and I feel sure that in most cases they will “make good.”

The Puni Settlement, situated in West Pukekohe, covers an area of 1301 acres, and is divided into twelve sections. All the sections were readily selected, and the settlers, after the first year or two, should do fairly well.

Waari Hamlet, situated within eleven miles of Auckland City, abutting on the railway-line, is cut up into sixteen small sections suitable for fruit and poultry farms, and was opened for selection last October. There are several of these sections not yet selected. In order to assist men taking up this land, which is of a refractory nature, a remission of the first two years' rent is granted. It is proposed to have the balance of the sections withdrawn from soldier-settlement and opened for general application.

Of the other settlements, the soldiers on Remuera are doing fairly well, and most of them will “make good.” The land is of good quality, and most of it well adapted for dairying. Some of the settlers with lands abutting on the Omapere Lake have had to receive assistance owing to the flooding of their sections by the rise of the lake-waters during the wet season. However, works are now in progress for lowering the lake-level, which will relieve these men of the disabilities under which they are now labouring. During the year good progress has been made with the formation of the internal roads on this estate, a fair proportion of the work being done by the soldier settlers themselves. Other work is being done by contract. This season, with more labour available, it is hoped to get the road-formation completed.

The settlers on the Pakaraka Block have done better during the past year than previously, and altogether their prospects are very much brighter. Most of the men are working very hard, and will, I feel sure, “make good.”

The Te Pua, Upokonui, and Puketi Settlements are comparatively new. The settlers, however, are shaping well, and have reasonable prospects of “making good.”

The Waimata Settlement, of 8,000 acres, being the property purchased from Crawford Bros., has proved very successful. The men who have taken up this land are proving very satisfactory settlers, and in the course of the next year or two should be successfully established. The settlers were badly off for road access last winter, but as the result of substantial repairs this winter this road is in much better condition. There is also a new road in course of construction which will very much improve the access. The new road will be completed by the end of this summer.

The settlers on the Streamlands and Waiteitei Settlements have had a fairly hard struggle. Both settlements were recently inspected by the members of the Land Board, and the case of every settler was given careful consideration. In one or two instances it will probably be found necessary to have a revaluation of the land, but in most cases, with a little help and assistance, the settlers will make a success of their farms.

The Motutara Settlement, situated on the west coast near Waimauku, on the Helensville line, recently acquired from Sir E. Mitchelson, will be available for selection about July. The block contains 3,215 acres, divided into eighteen sections, several of which are suitable for dairying.

Applications under section 2 of Discharged Soldiers Settlement Amendment Act, 1917.

Up to September, 1920, applications for financial assistance for the purchase of farms and houses were very numerous, but after that date applications for the purchase of houses were not received excepting under exceptional cases of hardship, and the same applied to applications for one-man-farm propositions. Since that date no applications have been received to purchase a farm unless the granting of such would lead to subdivision and the placing of two or more men on a property formerly