

APPENDICES.

APPENDIX I.—SETTLEMENT OF CROWN LANDS.

EXTRACTS FROM THE REPORTS OF THE COMMISSIONERS OF CROWN LANDS ON SETTLEMENT OPERATIONS DURING THE TWELVE MONTHS WHICH ENDED ON THE 31st MARCH, 1921.

NORTH AUCKLAND.

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

Conditions and Progress of Settlement.—Satisfactory progress has been made during the past year. The climatic conditions have been very favourable and the prices good for most of the year.

The settlers, of course, engaged in sheep-farming and stock-raising suffered, in common with those in other districts, in consequence of the fall in the price of stock and wool which occurred in the early part of this year. Settlers dependent altogether on wool and sheep values have been considerably embarrassed, and most of them who can afford to do so are holding on to their wool.

Land-values have increased during the last two or three years much in excess of values previously ruling, but the increase has not been so marked as in the southern districts. The price of good dairy land has never reached the high figure for which it has been selling in the south. Many of the soldier settlers who have bought dairy farms are in the happy position of finding their farms worth a much higher price to-day than when they purchased them. Nor has the price of purely grazing-land ever reached the high values obtaining in the Taranaki and Wellington and other southern districts. It is admitted that prices for land situated within twenty or thirty miles south of Auckland have increased to a great extent during the past few years, and the increase has been well maintained during the past year, but this increased value is in a measure owing to the proximity of the land to the largest city in the Dominion, which affords a good market for everything the small farmer can produce.

The Dairying Industry.—The past season has been a record one for the dairy-farmer. There has been a copious rainfall throughout the year and an abundance of grass, and all the conditions were favourable for the production of butterfat. This, added to the high prices obtaining for butter and cheese, resulted in a record season. The North Auckland District is particularly favoured in all seasons as a grass-producing district, owing to the fact that the grass grows practically all the year round and receives no serious check throughout the year except, perhaps, when there is an exceptionally dry summer.

The development of the dairying industry in the district has shown a remarkably rapid growth. There are now thirty factories in operation in the district, many of them with a big output. The export of dairy-produce for the season ending 30th April, 1920, was—butter, 3,804 tons, and cheese, 947 tons. The complete returns for the season ending April, 1921, are not available at present, but from inquiries made show an increase of 55 per cent. on the previous season's output. Some of the largest companies show an increase of output as follows: Northern Wairoa, 54 per cent.; Kaipara, 47 per cent.; Hikurangi, 127 per cent.; Kaitaia, 23 per cent. Some of the dairy factories in the north have great facilities for the transportation of cream, owing to the extensive waterways. This is particularly so in the case of the Northern Wairoa Company, which had an output of 1,074 tons for the season just closed, this factory being situated on the banks of the Wairoa River at Mangawhare, near Dargaville. This great Wairoa River, with its many tributaries, affords a splendid highway for the cheap and easy transportation of cream to the main factory. Possessing these great natural advantages, it is difficult to estimate the future expansion of this factory, situated as it is on one of the richest tracts of dairying-land in New Zealand. Rapid as the development of the industry has been in the past, there is ample scope for its future progress, for there are large areas of only partially developed land eminently suitable for dairying situated in the different parts of the northern district.

Freezing-works.—There were three freezing-works in operation in this district during the year—namely, Auckland Farmers' Freezing Company, at Southdown, close to Auckland City, and Fletcher Bros., with one establishment at Otahuhu and another near the Whangarei Heads. The latter works, however, were unfortunately destroyed by fire towards the end of the year, and there is some doubt as to whether they are to be reconstructed.

Important and valuable works are now in course of erection at Moewera, near Kawakawa. These new freezing-works are being built and equipped with the most up-to-date appliances, and will cost, when completed, upwards of £200,000. The works will have a daily killing-capacity of equal to 2,000 sheep, and a storage capacity of 100,000 60 lb. carcasses. These works are being erected by the Auckland Farmers' Freezing Company, and will be ready for opening in November or December of this year. The products from Moewera will be shipped from Opua, in the Bay of Islands Harbour, which will shortly be under the control of the newly constituted Bay of Islands Harbour Board. The Moewera works will serve the requirements for many years of the whole of the graziers in the Bay of Islands, Hokianga, Mangonui, and Whangaroa Counties, as well as part of the Whangarei County, and should prove a great boom to the farmers of the north. The establishment of these works, together with the comprehensive roading schemes which are now in process of being carried out by the various local bodies, evidence in a marked degree the sure and rapid development of the district.