

## APPENDICES.

### APPENDIX I.—SETTLEMENT OF CROWN LANDS.

#### EXTRACTS FROM THE REPORTS OF THE COMMISSIONERS OF CROWN LANDS.

##### NORTH AUCKLAND.

(H. J. LOWE, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

*Conditions and Progress of Settlement.*—A retrospect of the past year shows that progress has been steadily maintained. During the months of April and June the central portion of this district was visited by disastrous cyclonic rainstorms, causing an enormous amount of damage to railways, roads, stock, and newly sown grass-lands, and covering some parts of the country with heavy slips and spoiling the pastures upon the swamp-lands. After this period a fine stretch of warm and showery weather ensued, and brought away a luxuriant growth of grass, making an ideal season for cattle. From the reports of my Field Inspectors I gather that conditions on all farms generally have improved, more cows are being milked and more pastures put down. Hay crops this year have been above the average; but all will be wanted before the winter ends. In proportion to the area of land now used for grazing and general-farming purposes, the acreage devoted to cultivation is almost negligible. There is an absence of severe frosts except on very low-lying land, with a growth of grass more or less throughout the winter months, and these no doubt are the factors which retard intensive and progressive farming, which is so noticeable farther south.

A considerable portion of this district is purely grazing-country; but owing to the low prices received for beef this part of farming has been more or less neglected, and consequently pastures have suffered and deteriorated to a great extent owing to the spread of ferns and other noxious growth.

I have again to stress the value of paspalum on gum-land, and to point out the increase in butterfat where this grass is grown. The presence of this grass when grown in conjunction with English grasses is easily seen, as it causes the flush of the season to be prolonged a month or six weeks, and we have not enough frosts to kill it up here. It was apparent during the flood season, where areas of low-lying country were submerged by flood-waters for lengthy periods, that all grasses perished except paspalum, causing an immense growth of pennyroyal and other rubbish.

The disease prevalent among dairy herds is becoming alarming, and has this season been a serious loss to the dairying industry generally and a great setback to unfinancial settlers. The adoption of herd-testing has been a great boon to farmers, who, however, have been slow in taking advantage of it, but as the facilities are being extended no doubt more in this direction will be accomplished.

The uncertainty of the wool-market has resulted in dairying on land which should be devoted to depasturing sheep. The market opened very well, the prices being higher than the good ones received at the closing sales last season; this heartened up our settlers, as the rise in wool put up the price of sheep and thereby increased the price of cattle. For some international reason, however, the price of wool did not rise much above the opening sales, and thereafter declined quite 20 per cent., but on the whole the prices for the season were satisfactory.

*The Dairying Industry.*—Prices of butterfat have been irregular notwithstanding the dairy control, and with the present cost of bringing in and keeping dairy land in good order it will be a serious matter if the prices fall below 1s. 3d. per pound to the producer. There was a general increase in the dairy output for the whole of the north, resulting in several factories and additions to existing factories being erected. The quantity produced up to the 31st March, 1925, amounted to 14,538 tons of butter and 773 tons of cheese from twenty-nine dairy factories operating in this district.

*The Stock-market.*—The store-cattle market has shown an improved condition compared with last year, when stock was almost unsaleable. This rise was predicted in my last report. Now prices are getting back to a remunerative basis, due in some measure to the big shortage in calving which occurred in the Argentine.

Present prices for lamb and mutton are very good. Markets all round have a healthy tone.

*Pigs.*—Good prices and a fair demand for pigs still exist. More attention should be paid to this profitable side-line in dairy-farming, as satisfactory prices can be procured for all stock raised.

*Poultry.*—Shipments of eggs to London have been a pronounced success, but, beyond supplying local requirements, the industry as a whole has not made much headway owing to the high prices of food.

*Fruit.*—Crops have been exceedingly good throughout the district, but prices obtained do not show much profit for the grower. Large orchards are being gradually diminished and are now being used as dairy farms, the supply being evidently greater than the demand.