

The whole question is shortly to be examined by a Royal Commission, and until the report is furnished it is not expected that the revenue from rates will recover. Rates over the Kaitaia Swamp area will in all probability be levied in the coming year.

Draughting Staff.—This staff has been kept busily employed during the year on general plan work, computations, general searching, and the supply of survey data. In addition considerable work was done in the preparation of Proclamation plans, and all other matters incidental to the proclamation of land transactions under the various statutes. On the engineering side the staff has spent considerable time on checking various designs and on the designing of spillways, flood-gates, drains, &c. The lithograph maps of the various districts have been kept up to date. Considerable work has been done on the photostat, approximately 3,400 prints having been made during the year.

APPENDIX IV.—SAND-DUNE RECLAMATION.

For some years past the Department has been carrying on operations in connection with sand-dune reclamations in the North Auckland District. These operations have from the commencement been under the direction of Mr. Stafford, who is responsible to the Commissioner of Crown Lands. The expenditure is authorized by the Department, but the funds are provided out of the Public Works Fund.

The problem of these dune areas is a difficult one; but much good work, though of course principally of an experimental nature, has been accomplished, and Mr. Stafford has carried out his work enthusiastically and on sound and practical lines. The method chiefly adopted is to plant marram-grass in a manner best calculated to enable it to spread itself, so as to get the most possible advantage at the least possible cost. Then later on comes the lupin-seed planting under the protection of the established marram-grass, and subsequently the planting of trees and grasses in the most suitable places. Unfortunately, for reasons of economy, the tree nurseries that had been established have had to be closed, and all the locally raised trees have been planted out.

The great troubles have been the ever-present risk of fire, and a great deal of stock trespass. It is impossible with the means at the disposal of the Department to exercise any complete degree of control over the extensive areas being dealt with, and, unfortunately, the periodical firing of the vegetation of the coastal-dune areas has proved a severe handicap.

In the opinion of the Commissioner of Crown Lands the plantations that have been established at Waipu seem to prove conclusively that the dunes can be satisfactorily held, though it is much easier to effect this on the east coast than on the west, where the prevailing winds are so much stronger and last longer. The Department, however, is unable to undertake tree-planting on any large scale, as to do so would involve a heavy expenditure and the employment of rangers to control the planted areas.

The State Forest Service has been carrying out experimental dune work at the Rangitikei Heads, and it would appear advisable that all operations of this nature under the direction of the Government should be conducted on the same basis. With this end in view, and having regard to the apparent desirability of afforestation over large areas of the North Auckland dunes, a closer co-operation is being sought with the State Forest Service, and when the matter has been fully discussed the question as to whether the work now being done should be continued, and, if so, on what lines, will be submitted or consideration.

Table 1.—RETURN SHOWING (APPROXIMATELY) POSITION OF LANDS IN THE DOMINION AT 31ST MARCH, 1925.

District.	Total Area sold or granted and held on Freehold.	Total Area reserved for Public Purposes.	Total Area of Crown Lands leased under all Tenures (exclusive of Reserves leased by Crown).	Total Area of Crown Lands available for future Disposal.	Total Area of Native Land.	Land unfit for Settlement (including Area occupied by Rivers, Lakes, Roads, &c).	Total Area in Land District.
	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.
North Auckland	2,466,564	428,898	465,784	294,100	605,426	217,428	4,478,200
Auckland ..	2,510,285	772,947	1,063,582	1,107,058	2,157,255	609,446	8,220,573
Gisborne ..	1,118,145	424,182	518,365	136,096	1,068,898	253,805	3,519,491
Hawke's Bay ..	1,530,570	200,144	578,989	123,560	398,638	82,420	2,914,321
Taranaki ..	1,107,541	336,581	579,753	115,983	195,817	68,756	2,404,431
Wellington* ..	3,378,306	999,633	749,946	265,681	1,424,908	232,595	7,051,069
Nelson ..	632,594	2,292,914	862,299	270,654	30,629	625,910	4,715,000
Marlborough ..	785,003	354,031	1,534,139	10,805	..	84,022	2,768,000
Westland ..	157,277	2,022,909	806,513	407,451	..	469,228	3,863,378
Canterbury ..	3,575,039	1,397,924	4,012,836	9,788	..	482,843	9,478,430
Otago ..	1,970,673	951,729	5,503,801	16,021	..	651,898	9,094,122
Southland ..	1,836,663	4,243,289	1,550,485	168,213	..	84,597	7,883,247
Totals ..	21,068,660	14,425,181	18,226,492	2,925,410	5,881,571	3,862,948	66,390,262

* Includes Chatham Islands.