

Te Reinga Block, Wairoa : Three selectors, all residing. The great trouble with this block is the blackberry. One holding is so badly infested with it that it is probable that when the remission of rent granted to him expires the settler will surrender. The other two settlers are first-class men doing very good work. They have had a satisfactory season, but will have to be helped on considerably for a year or two yet. The access to this block is still very difficult.

Kahotea Block, Wairoa : The two selectors on this block are still residing. One man is particularly keen, but lacks ability. The block is a very difficult one to work. Both settlers are just about holding on.

Homebush Settlement, Gisborne : It was found necessary to forfeit three of the holdings on this settlement during the year. In two cases the areas were very small, the land having been cut up with the idea of suiting men who had work to do in the district. The drainage problem has to a great extent been attended to, the course of the main outlet stream having been diverted. One section remains unselected, but will probably be soon disposed of. Three of the settlers have milk-runs and are supplying the Gisborne Borough. Four more are dairying. One of the troubles of this settlement is that the waters on the large catchment area at the back have no definite stream to take storm-water away ; this water consequently stands, leaving the land very sodden. The trouble from this source, however, will not be so great now that the diversion above referred to has been completed.

Repongaere Settlement : Seven of the settlers on this settlement are dairying, the remaining four grazing hill land. The flat land on this settlement is first-class quality, but is inclined to get wet and waterlogged during the winter. This is partly the fault of the settlers in not keeping their drains cleaned out. The main outlet drain has been widened and deepened, and a further sum is being spent on subsidiary drains. Four of the men who are dairying do not take very kindly to it. The settlers on the hill land, now that they have been granted a considerable reduction, are quite satisfied, but further advances will probably be necessary.

Glencoe Settlement, Gisborne : Five settlers on this land, all residing. Several of the sections, being very wet, remain unselected. These have now been withdrawn from selection pending the construction of new drains by the Public Works Department, at a cost of between £2,000 and £3,000. Many of the unselected sections, when drained, will have to be used for the purpose of increasing the areas of present holdings. These settlers are all dairying, and are doing very well.

Wharekaka Settlement, Tolaga Bay : The drawbacks in the shape of inadequate draining and lack of water referred to in the last report are still in evidence. Steps are being taken to cope with the drainage trouble at one end of the settlement, but the main outlet at the back, a small tidal stream, still wants cleaning out. The water problem is still under consideration. The Public Works Department is still investigating the matter, and it is probable that a pipe-line will have to be constructed from the Uawa River, and pumping resorted to at low water. One settler had his holding forfeited during the year, but the remainder are all of a very good type, and are doing well. This settlement has a good future before it.

Paremata Settlement, Tolaga Bay : Six holdings ; all settlers residing. The settlement wintered 234 cows, sixty-nine yearlings, eleven bulls, and nineteen horses. The settlers are all triers, but some of them have not yet recovered from the setback they received when they first started, through having to stock up with cattle at peak prices. The dairy returns now, however, are very good.

Hurakia Block, Waipatu : The settlers on this block continue to do well. They are all hard workers and optimists. Some slight readjustments are still necessary in the matter of boundaries and the provision of homestead-sites. The standard of improvements effected on this settlement is uniformly high.

Waipiro Block, Waipiro : The selection of this block was a comparatively recent event. The settlers are of a particularly good type. The land is all sheep-country, and with the assistance of local runholders the settlers were well stocked up to begin with, and they have done exceedingly well for their first season. This block is one of the finest soldier blocks in this district.

Hukutaia Settlement, Opotiki : On this settlement the majority of settlers continue to do well, but it has been found necessary to forfeit three of the holdings. The fault did not lie so much with the holdings as with the inexperience of the selectors. The rents on this settlement are still further in arrear than they should be. Two bush sections withheld from the original ballot have now been allotted, and three other holdings have been increased from the surrendered areas. With these adjustments there should be no further trouble with this settlement. It is very handy to Opotiki, and as long as the price of butterfat remains at its present figure these settlers must succeed.

HAWKE'S BAY.

(J. D. THOMSON, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

No new areas were acquired in this district during the year for discharged soldiers, and beyond the reoffering of a few abandoned farms the position is substantially that prevailing at the 1st April, 1924.

The settlers are gradually developing their farms, and, with some of them, the knowledge gained in the hard school of experience is standing them in good stead.

The Fordson tractor is taking on with a number of settlers—this applies to civilian settlers also—and in the hands of a farmer of a natural mechanical bent should prove a very useful implement for cultivation work and general development. During the hot weather the tractor, with spring-tine cultivator, can be made to work longer hours in the killing of twitch and other weeds than could be endured by a team of horses. It is a mistake, however, for the farmer to dispose of his team and rely wholly on the tractor.