

different persons in the peninsula who had the required food suitable for them. The Peninsula Farmers' Club, and others taking an interest in the development of this industry, have, through Mr. Westerra, taken steps for a supply of the mulberry (*morus alba*) from Auckland, Melbourne, and Sydney. Mr. Federli sums up his experience of last season in the statement: "The silkworms thrive exceedingly well, and there can be no doubt the climate is exceptionally adapted to them."

With the object of widening the interest in this industry, Mr. Federli was directed to prepare an exhibit for the Christchurch Exhibition, showing in order the various stages of grain, worms, cocoons, and raw silk; also plants of the *morus alba*, the best variety of mulberry for silkworms. In this manner the attention of many persons has been directed to an industry which ought to thrive in New Zealand, where the natural conditions are so favourable. Mr. Federli has a supply of acclimatized grain which will enable a distribution to be made next season. Meanwhile he will prepare a pamphlet giving practical directions for the guidance of those who may engage in sericulture.

Olive Culture.—This is also an industry that might be established in New Zealand. The great commercial value of the products of the olive to Italy and the south of France is well known. The olive is grown in gardens at various points in both islands, and in the North Island it ought to flourish especially well. The industry cannot be begun at will: it must necessarily be preceded by the planting and growth of trees; and, as a step in that direction, one hundred and fifty truncheons were obtained from Adelaide twelve months ago, and planted out in gardens in Christchurch and Akaroa, where, so far, they have done well. As the colony increases in population more attention will have to be given to what can be produced from the special natural aptitudes of climate and soil, of a country that ranges over thirteen degrees of latitude—viz., 34° to 47° South.

GENERAL AND DEPARTMENTAL.

The area of Crown lands has been augmented by the proclamation of completion of purchase of 925,605 acres of Native lands. These lands are all in the North Island. Their acquisition is important in enabling the settlement of the country to proceed in a more systematic manner in opening of roads, and in keeping up the continuity of occupation so that settlements are not kept isolated from each other.

The ordinary routine of office work has proceeded in the usual manner. There is a steady increase of business in those Land Offices where the deferred-payment system is in vogue, and a corresponding increase in the work of the Head Office, for in connection with the settlement conditions of the Land Act, and in other ways, there are constantly questions arising requiring reference to the Minister for decision. The references last year to and from the Head Office amounted to a total of 2,400, and the letters received and despatched, to 7,216. Crown grants and schedules for certificate of title were examined and issued for 3,468 land purchases.

During the current year there will be no falling off in the transactions, for the department will be able to offer nearly 500,000 acres of surveyed lands, for sale and settlement, and about 2,000,000 acres of pastoral country for lease. As New Zealand is a long stretch of country, of about 1,100 miles from north to south, it is essential that, if the department would make known what lands are open for selection, they be well and widely advertised. As a means to this end there was during the year a distribution from the Head Office of 29,769 plans, posters, and pamphlets, in addition to the local advertisements by the eleven Commissioners in their respective land districts. The "Crown Lands Guide," Rotorua pamphlets, and advertisements and plans of Otago runs, were sent well abroad outside of the colony. The distribution of maps is the best advertisement, and is of the most essential and valuable aid to the selector in making his choice. In the extensive areas to be offered during the current year care will be taken that plans are published in advance of the days of application and sale. I have much pleasure in again recognizing the cordial co-operation of Mr. Elliott (Under-Secretary), the Commissioners, and other officers of the Department.

J. MCKERROW.