

COMMITTEES

The mounting volume of sales has imposed a heavy burden on Committees, particularly in the metropolitan areas. In Auckland and Wellington it has been necessary to strengthen the Committees to enable more "sitting" time. The Committees have worked faithfully and assiduously, and it is freely granted that the successful administration of the Act is in the main due to the Chairmen and the members.

DESPATCH OF WORK

The further and rather unexpected increase in the volume of applications has taxed the force of valuers available to the Crown and, indeed, to the vendors and purchasers. It was supposed that as standards of values were settled by the Committees and Court, sale prices would tend to be fixed voluntarily at the recognized levels. That expectation has unfortunately been far astray. Prices agreed upon between contracting parties tend to become higher, and therefore the need for valuations becomes correspondingly greater. Although it seemed for a while that some special administrative arrangement would have to be devised to bring arrears of work within manageable proportions, the valuing and office staffs have brought the position within control. At the time of writing this report the graphed line of arrears has taken an encouraging downward curve.

During the year the data on which is based the process of valuation was revised and consolidated. This has been a great help to valuers and Committees. It has brought about a great measure of uniformity in the technique of valuing, and rarely is it to be found that more than a few points of difference arise between opposing valuers.

APPEALS

Unfortunately, appeals have not been dealt with as promptly as could be wished. The Judge of the Court, the Honourable Mr. Justice Finlay, had to devote much time to duties in the Supreme Court and Court of Appeal. Towards the end of the period under review, Mr. Justice Finlay was obliged to give all his attention to those judicial functions. Temporary arrangements to deal with the appeals pending the appointment of a full-time Judge have been made by appointing Mr. Justice Ongley an additional Judge. During the year, 295 appeals were filed. Of these, 16 were allowed in full, 51 in part, and 98 yet remain to be dealt with. Since the 31st March these arrears have in large measure been despatched.

THE EXERCISE OF CROWN RIGHTS UNDER SECTION 51 AND PART II OF THE ACT

Although section 51 has not been used extensively, the existence of this provision has resulted in an ever-increasing number of direct sales to ex-servicemen (of which details are given elsewhere). In the same way it has not been necessary to make very much use of Part II of the Act. The very existence of the compulsory provisions to take land has been a powerful factor in enabling the Land Settlement Board to negotiate directly for the sale and purchase of suitable blocks. However, during the year five notices have been issued under Part II of the Act, involving 6,661 acres of land which it is estimated will provide thirty-four farms.

PERSONNEL CHANGES ON COMMITTEES

The following appointments were made during the year in place of Chairmen and Committeemen who vacated their offices for the reasons stated:—

- E. H. Burton, Chairman, North Auckland Committee, *vice* S. I. Goodall appointed Stipendiary Magistrate.
- H. E. Beattie, member of Hawke's Bay Committee, *vice* F. J. Douglas, resigned.
- E. Sincock, member of Otago Committee, *vice* R. Walls, resigned.