

£20,669, the increase over last year's appropriation being accounted for by grants for hospital and education purposes, a new freezing plant, and the installation of wireless systems at Mangaia and Niue.

This year radio-stations will be opened on the islands of Aitutaki and Mangaia, in the Lower Cook Group, and a radio-telephone station will be installed on the Island of Niue. These services will do much to remove the greatest handicap to the development of trade with these isolated communities. The future for trade and revenue is bright.

REVALUATION OF SOLDIER FARMS.

In conformity with the legislation passed last session authorizing the revaluation of soldier farms, a Dominion Revaluation Board was appointed, and twenty-three District Revaluation Committees set up. The duty of the Committees is to inspect and value the farms in their respective districts, and submit their reports to the central Board.

The field-work in some of the smaller districts has been finished, but it will be some time yet before the whole of the necessary inspections and valuations in the larger districts can be finalized.

The Board and the Committee are impressed with the urgent nature of this important work, and everything possible is being done to expedite early completion.

Recommendations are coming to hand, and in many cases mortgages have already been substantially reduced both as regards capital and interest liabilities, and substantial relief has also been afforded in the case of arrears.

It is the policy of the Government to give industrious men every possible chance, and there are already indications of a great improvement in soldiers' settlements.

DISCHARGED SOLDIERS SETTLEMENT.

From the inception of the scheme of the discharged soldiers settlement in 1915 to the end of the financial year advances have been made to discharged soldiers as follows:—

Section 6, Discharged Soldiers Settlement Act, 1915—Advances on Current Account (including £1,345,000 for the erection of buildings on farms)—						£
4,845 returned soldiers	..	..	..	..	..	4,386,000
Section 2, Discharged Soldiers Settlement Amendment Act, 1917—Advances towards purchase of farms, market gardens, orchards, and discharge of mortgages—						
5,498 returned soldiers	..	..	..	..	..	8,905,400
Section 2, Discharged Soldiers Settlement Amendment Act, 1917—Advances towards purchase and erection of dwellings and discharge of mortgages thereon in town and suburban areas—						
11,870 returned soldiers	..	..	..	..	..	8,572,100
<u>22,213 returned soldiers</u>	..	..	..	..	..	<u>£21,863,500</u>

During the period the mortgages have run, receipts from the sale of stock, wool, and other farm-produce, and repayment of loans under the instalment system, amount to £2,965,400. The receipts are 13·56 per cent. of the total capital advanced. The money received has been applied for the purpose of re-advances to purchase stock or improve properties, for loans on Current Account, and also to clear off liabilities contracted early in the year for the erection of dwellings.

The receipts for the year amount to £1,513,544, being the largest amount received to date in any one year. Of this sum £792,268 represents repayment of advances, while receipts in respect of interest and sundries total £721,276.