

CANTERBURY.

(W. STEWART, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

The older-established settlements have caused the Department little trouble during the past year. Numerous applications have been received for revaluation under section 216 of the Land Act, 1924, and the Revaluation Committee have been dealing with these. The rental adjustments made should have the effect of placing the tenants on a satisfactory footing, and removing all cause for discontent.

A large number of properties have been offered for purchase, and a number of these are still under consideration by the Land Purchase Board. The field staff is kept continuously employed in dealing with these offers, which show no sign of abating.

OTAGO.

(N. C. KENSINGTON, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

During the year a good deal of activity has taken place in this district by various inspections of land under offer, and areas purchased and opened for settlement. The areas actually purchased and opened for settlement consist of Rockford Settlement, of 1,737 acres, subdivided into four sections; Murrayfield Settlement, 1,074 acres, subdivided into two sections. All the sections in the above settlements have been taken up. In addition, Wilden Settlement, of 24,005 acres, Tapanui Settlement, of 1,949 acres, and Rosebery Settlement, of 3,912 acres, have been purchased, and the subdivision has been completed in readiness for offering; but as the actual offering will not take place till early in April they will be fully dealt with in next year's report.

The original settlers on the older settlements are in a good position on account of the general rise in land-values, but in the case of transfers the incoming settler still continues in many cases to overload himself with a heavy goodwill. Generally, however, the position of settlers on areas purchased under the Land for Settlements Act can be regarded as very satisfactory.

SOUTHLAND.

(J. MACDONALD, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

Several properties in this district were purchased during the year under the provisions of the Land for Settlements Act, all being bought prior to the financial stringency that followed in the wake of the serious drop in wool-values. Two properties were amalgamated in Tamatea Settlement, and two in Fern Hill Settlement, and these, together with Brydone Settlement, were offered for selection before the close of the year on the 31st March. Tamatea Settlement, comprising seven excellent dairy-farms varying in size from 109 acres to 196 acres, was opened in January, and although all the farms were taken up, the demand was not so keen as was expected. The selectors, however, without exception, impressed the Land Board as being of the most desirable type—strong, young, experienced, and determined. Fern Hill Settlement, comprising five farms in areas from 256 to 317 acres, all of which were considered to be admirably suited for mixed farming, was opened in February, but only two holdings were selected. Brydone Settlement, of two farms, was offered in March. One holding was taken up on the day of opening and the other a few days later. No purchase so far has been made under what is known as the group-settlement scheme set out in Part II of the Land Laws Amendment Act, 1928.

The older settlements are now occupied by tenants who, on the whole, are prosperous and contented. Perhaps the best indication of progress and prosperity is afforded by the rent returns. Twelve months ago forty-three lessees were in arrears to the amount of £1,929. The corresponding figures for the year just closed are twenty-two and £1,321. A revaluation of the holdings on Beaumont Settlement was made during the year, and the hope is expressed that the settlers on this settlement will now enter upon a period of uninterrupted prosperity.