

with a [degree of success, but those on later-acquired properties such as Westella, Gower, Phillips, Currie, and Waitawa are obliged to finance very carefully to pay their way. These latter tenants, however, have lands of excellent quality, and they should soon pull up when prices return to anything like normal. In parts of the Wellington District, notably in the Wairarapa, a severe drought is being experienced, and tenants, in addition to their troubles with poor prices, are facing the winter with no feed-supplies to carry them through. At time of writing the Department is endeavouring to relieve the position by supplying hay to those tenants affected by the drought.

NELSON.

(A. F. WATERS, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

No additional properties have been purchased during the past year. One property was offered under the Group Settlement Scheme, but was found unsuitable for the purpose.

MARLBOROUGH.

(P. R. WILKINSON, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

No new settlements have been acquired under the Land for Settlements Act in this district during the past year.

The semi-drought conditions, which have been experienced in the main settlement areas, in conjunction with the poor prices received for produce have made the year an exceptionally difficult one for most settlers, but the sympathetic consideration which is being extended to all genuine triers by the Department should enable them to carry on.

WESTLAND.

(T. CAGNEY, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

No areas were acquired under the Lands for Settlements Act during the period. The settlers on the Raupo Settlement, acquired about three years ago, continue to make good progress, and practically all rents, notwithstanding low prices for produce, have been met to date. All other settlements in Westland are old-established, originally selected on lease-in-perpetuity tenure. A number of these holdings have been converted to freehold, and the administration of the remainder is now purely a matter of routine.

CANTERBURY.

(W. STEWART, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

No new estates have been acquired during the present year, but the Department still continues to administer Brinklands, and is substantially improving its condition by subsidiary draining and improving the pastures, the benefit of which will be secured when the estate is offered for selection. So trying has been the season, that temporary concessions have had to be granted in some cases even to settlers on our oldest and cheapest settlements.

OTAGO.

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

No new settlements were opened up during the year, and the settlers who took up recently purchased estates during the past two years have been in difficulties. Even the fact that stock was purchased at a low figure has not been of great assistance, as the necessary buildings, fencing, &c., made a heavy call on capital without an adequate return. On all new settlements this difficulty occurs, but has been accentuated by the extraordinary low prices ruling for farm-produce.

On the older settlements various difficulties have been experienced, caused in many cases by the heavy goodwills paid. This has led to much financial embarrassment, and mortgagees are not in an enviable position.

In North Otago, on account of the dry conditions that have existed, even some of the original settlers have been in difficulties, but with the present outlook for a good season, even with the reduction in price of wheat, they will probably show a rapid recovery. Reports go to show that most settlements are carrying a large amount of stock and that production is being maintained to full capacity.

SOUTHLAND.

(B. C. McCABE, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

During the year only one property was purchased under the Land for Settlements Act—*i.e.*, the McCallum Settlement. This was established as a group settlement under Part II of the Land Laws Amendment Act, 1928, and four sections of a total area of 285 acres 1 rood 22 perches were provided. On these the settlers are making good progress in the effecting of drainage and other improvements. On the older settlements there is little to report. All have, of course, been affected by the adverse markets, and this condition is particularly acute where the land is of only medium quality and where the settler is limited to cropping and to sheep-grazing. On the other hand, on land of dairying quality, in spite of the higher charges on that class of land, the settlers have made a much better showing.

In the case of the settlements established during the years 1929–31, good progress has been made in the effecting of improvements and in stocking up, and although under the present rigorous conditions the settlers have not been able to fully pay their way, the land is generally of sufficiently good quality to promise ultimate success.