

APPENDIX.

EXTRACTS FROM REPORTS OF COMMISSIONERS OF CROWN LANDS.

NORTH AUCKLAND.

(W. D. ARMIT, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

GENERAL conditions in regard to soldier settlement have shown an improvement in management, but prices and factors outside the control of the farmers have necessitated postponements and remissions being granted in deserving cases. Settlers and mortgagors in curtailing capital expenditure on improvements have shown commendable energy in carrying out, unaided, works for which they might have reasonably been granted assistance. In herd-management the soldier settlers to-day compare favourably with the majority of farmers, and the position is reflected in the increased returns they are obtaining.

During the year the position regarding house properties has become accentuated by unemployment, and the continued effect of reduced incomes. The Land Board has endeavoured to meet the position by granting relief in postponing principal payments and adjusting mortgages. Notwithstanding the concessions granted, a number of soldiers have found it impossible even to meet interest charges, and have abandoned their homes. In these cases the properties have been let on weekly tenancies at a rental in most cases sufficient to meet interest on the capital charges.

AUCKLAND.

(K. M. GRAHAM, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

The large number of dairying soldier settlers in this district is experiencing a most difficult time. Butterfat prices showed a marked further drop, and the payout for the season will not average more than 9d. Fortunately, the season was a good one, and the average production showed a marked increase.

As far as sheep-farmers were concerned, the position showed no improvement. Wool prices remained much the same and lamb prices fell.

The Land Board held a special meeting and they recommend such relief in respect of rent and mortgage charges on farm properties as was considered to be deserving in each case.

Owners of house properties have also been experiencing a difficult time owing to the prevailing depression, and it has unfortunately been found necessary to exercise power of sale in a few cases. It is worthy of note that the Mortgagors' Relief Commission upheld the action of the Department in practically every case in which an appeal was lodged. In many cases substantial relief has been given to mortgagors of house properties by adjustment of mortgages for a fresh term where, owing to unemployment or reduced incomes, such mortgagors have been unable to keep their payments up to date under the original mortgages.

GISBORNE.

(H. L. PRIMROSE, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

Soldier settlers generally are not behind the rest of the farming community in their ability to face adverse economic conditions, and most of them are doing as well on "economy rations" as can reasonably be expected.

They have not been slow to avail themselves of every source of revenue open to them, nor to take full advantage of unemployment schemes, where possible, for the improvement of their holdings. In a few instances work has had to be obtained for some of the small holders under Scheme 4A, the Commissioner acting as employer.

Dairy-farmers have endeavoured to increase their output both by herd-testing and by increasing herds. All advances have been reduced to bare necessities, and no new advances granted. A still further reduction of revenue must be expected, chiefly on account of the increase in the number of owners of house properties who are unemployed.

HAWKE'S BAY.

(J. F. QUINN, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

Like the ordinary settler, the soldier settler has had a hard time during the past year, the price of wool being practically stationary at a very low level, and the price of butterfat having fallen considerably during the season.

The majority of the settlers are finding it difficult to meet their obligations to the Crown, but the Department is assisting as far as possible by making advances for working-expenses when the stock is under security to the Crown, and by granting postponements or remissions where necessary in order to keep the settlers on the land.

House Properties.—Considerable difficulty is being experienced in collecting instalments of interest and principal, as quite a number of mortgagors are now on the unemployed list and are unable to pay their instalments in full. Assistance is being given by adjusting mortgages in order to reduce the payments, or by accepting payment of interest in the meantime.

Hunter Soldiers' Assistance Trust Board.—The Board held seven meetings during the year, and loans totalling £2,445 were granted to soldier settlers for improving their farms. Grants to the amount of £105 were approved in the cases of eighteen orphan children of deceased soldiers.