

## TARANAKI.

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

The position of soldier settlers generally shows some improvement on last year, owing to the increase in the prices of primary products. The improvement is more pronounced in the case of the sheep-farmer, owing to a rise of over 40 per cent. in the price of wool and the increase in the prices of fat lamb, mutton, and beef. The dairy-farmer, however, will find the welcome increase in butterfat, though small, of great benefit, although the price is still too low to enable the average farmer to pay his way. The man above the average, of whom there are not many, will have no difficulty. This is due to the fact that he tests and culls and only keeps cows of a high butterfat-production, runs pigs on scientific lines, manures well, keeps poultry, grows his own potatoes, grows root crops, saves grass for hay and ensilage, and neglects no side-line which will help to enhance his income. The majority of mortgagors in this district are dairy-farmers, and of these the Department absolutely controls forty-eight, all income coming in and all payments being made by the Department. These men are on a fixed monthly allowance, and the Department is able to control expenditure to keep it within reasonable limits as determined by the proceeds. In all cases adequate supplies of manures are provided. Practically all these settlers are steadily improving their farms and increasing production. Considerable expenditure has been incurred during the year in rebuilding, enlarging and repairing houses, and erection of cow-sheds and outhouses.

The Department continued to farm seven abandoned properties, and one of these was disposed of during the year. Another will be offered very shortly, and it is hoped to dispose of the others during the coming year. With the exception of one very rough backblock property, the farms are showing a profit after charging interest on capital.

The position of house properties shows a slight improvement, the outstandings at the end of the year being about £500 less than the previous year. Many advances have been made towards repairs, painting, reconditioning, and enlarging houses.

## WELLINGTON.

(H. W. C. MACKINTOSH, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

The remarks made concerning the settlement of Crown and settlement lands apply also to the areas occupied by discharged soldiers. Most of these men follow dairying for a living, and they will come out about the same as last year. The wet spring and summer have resulted in a great growth of grass, and every settler should have plenty of hay or ensilage saved for winter feeding. Those settlers who are following sheep-farming have had a better year, as prices for both stock and wool have been considerably higher. In some districts, notably Wangamui and lower Wairarapa, floods have been experienced. In the Wairarapa no less than eight floods occurred, and while serious damage was done only in a very few cases, settlers received a check until the silt was cleared off their grass by subsequent rains. The Land Board has reviewed the cases of settlers who are in arrear with their payments, and recommendations have been made, which, it is hoped, will be of assistance in enabling these farmers to become established. The clauses in the Land Act providing for revaluation of farming lands, which have been suspended for some time, have now been revived, and at the present time many applications, either for revaluation or adjustment of mortgage liabilities, have been received and are now receiving attention.

## NELSON.

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

The majority of soldier settlers in the district are dependent on dairying or sheep-farming for a livelihood and few of them through the slump period have been able to meet their commitments in full. All cases of arrears have been recently reviewed by the Land Board and, where circumstances warranted, concessions have been made by way of remission, postponement, or capitalization of arrears. With the prospect of better prices for the future it was considered advisable to dispose of outstanding arrears and so enable the soldier settlers to face the coming years unencumbered by a burden of debt accumulated during the slump period.

## MARLBOROUGH.

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

The great majority of our soldier settlers are engaged in farming pursuits on small holdings.

Periodical reviews by the Office and Land Board, and practical help by way of remissions and postponements, have made matters easier for them.

Generally speaking, they are a good type of settler, but it is noticed that as time goes on war disabilities are recurring and surely taking toll; this is, no doubt, inevitable, but it is with deep regret that one has to record the fact.

## WESTLAND.

(C. I. MARTIN, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

The past season has been a much more encouraging one for all classes of soldier settlers.

Climatic conditions have been favourable and the improved prices for all classes of produce are reflected in the revenue received, which shows an increase of 14 per cent. on the previous year's figures.

During the year consideration was given to all arrears of rent and interest which had accumulated to the end of the previous season. In all cases where such action was warranted substantial concessions by way of remissions were extended.

This assistance should give the soldier settlers fresh heart to carry on and, provided prices for produce do not decline again, the majority should be in a position to face the future with confidence.