

TARANAKI.

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

On the 1st December, 1936, the Department's securities over discharged soldiers' properties were transferred to the State Advances Corporation of New Zealand, thus effecting a change in the control which had existed since the inception of the Scheme. The change was effected very quietly, and apparently the settlers have accepted the transfer in the proper spirit, realizing that their interests are not likely to be adversely affected. I would, however, place on record receiving many letters from soldier settlers thanking the Department for the way in which their interests have been protected in the past and expressing regret at the severance of control.

The Office retains charge of properties which have been bought in and not yet disposed of. Five of these properties are being farmed by the Department, and in each case, after charging up interest on capital, a profit has been made.

WELLINGTON.

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

The settlement of discharged soldiers on the land was not confined to any particular locality, and soldier farms are to be found right throughout the district, so that the remarks made upon general settlement would apply equally to soldier settlement.

Generally a cold winter was experienced, and wet weather conditions prevailed during spring and summer. As a result of the abundant rainfall there was a rank growth of grass, and while this was good for the production of butterfat, it militated against the best results from early lambs. Those settlers who follow dairying have had a fairly good year. The season, although there has been plenty of grass, has proved rather too wet, and returns will be much the same as last year. The guaranteed price for butterfat is having the effect of stabilizing prices for dairy stock, dairy cows averaging about £8 or £9.

Those settlers who follow sheep-farming have had a very good year and have obtained most encouraging prices for both wool and stock. Prices for fat lambs have also been high and, taking everything into consideration, the pastoralist has experienced a good year. It is pleasing to record that many settlers are giving attention to top-dressing their pastures and also to painting their dwellings and farm buildings.

A considerable number of settlers have applied for relief under the Mortgagors and Lessees Rehabilitation Act, 1936, and at the time of writing their cases are being investigated. This work will necessarily occupy a long period before it is finalized.

On the 1st October, 1936, all mortgages held under the Discharged Soldiers Settlement Act were handed over to the State Advances Corporation and are now administered by the Corporation.

NELSON.

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

The majority of soldier settlers in the district are dependent on dairying and sheep-farming, while a small proportion are dependent on fruit, tobacco, and hop growing for a livelihood.

While the majority of soldier settlers had their cases reviewed last year by the Land Board and, where circumstances warranted, concessions were made by way of remissions, postponements, or capitalization of arrears, applications for relief under the Mortgagors and Lessees Rehabilitation Act, 1936, were lodged for further relief. These applications are now being dealt with, and it is hoped that as a result of the opportunities afforded that settlers generally will be in a position to meet future charges.

MARLBOROUGH.

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

Most of our soldier settlers are engaged in farming comparatively small areas, and the lack of scope in these holdings is made very apparent when returns from farm products drop below a reasonable margin.

Settlers under this heading have, generally speaking, been appreciative of the assistance rendered by the Department by way of remissions, &c. It is apparent that in quite a number of cases a further adjustment of charges is necessary, but, as the majority of the soldier mortgagors have filed applications under the Mortgagors and Lessees Rehabilitation Act, 1936, the doubtful cases will be adjusted in due course.

The receipts for the year show an increase of more than 40 per cent. over the previous year.

WESTLAND.

(B. KING, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

Notwithstanding adverse climatic conditions, the guaranteed price for butterfat during the past season enabled soldier settlers to increase their income, with the result that revenue receipts approximated a 30 per cent. increase, the total being £11,190 13s., as against £8,633 19s. 5d. last year.

During the year further consideration was given to accumulated arrears, and in all cases where such action was warranted substantial concessions by way of remissions were recommended and approved.

These remissions to the settlers concerned and the better prices now prevailing should place a large majority of the soldier settlers in this district in a position where they should be able to meet their obligations without any difficulty.