

The following is a statement of the financial transactions referred to:—

<i>Advances Account.</i>			
	Advances.		
	£	s.	d.
Auckland, 1913-17	1,576	15	2
Taranaki, 1912-17	6,511	0	0
Wellington, 1913-17	1,994	10	10
Totals	£10,082	6	0

	Repayments.		
	£	s.	d.
	1,323	13	11
	5,345	9	4
	1,714	18	6
Totals	£8,384	1	9

	£	s.	d.
	253	1	3
	1,165	10	8
	279	12	4
Totals	£1,698	4	3

<i>Revenue Account.</i>			
	£	s.	d.
Interest allowed at 4 per cent. on money advanced out of Consolidated Fund	1,156	12	6
Approximate cost of administration	150	0	0
Balance	52	1	10
	£1,358	14	4

	£	s.	d.
Interest charged to settlers at 5 per cent.	1,358	14	4
	£1,358	14	4

Interest in arrear at the 31st March, 1917, £101 15s. 5d.

OTHER FINANCIAL CONCESSIONS.

Postponements and Remissions of Rent.

38. Besides advancing money to settlers to improve and stock their holdings, the Act permits of concessions being granted with regard to the half-yearly payment of rent. Where the settler is in a fairly good financial position at the outset and only needs temporary relief a postponement of rent will probably meet the case, but where circumstances warrant it and the settler is unable to work his holding profitably for some little time he may be exempted from payment of rent for a limited period. Each case is treated on its merits and receives such concession as is reasonable and justified.

39. Postponements of rent were granted during the year to forty-nine discharged soldiers, the amount being £1,679. These were to enable the settlers to establish themselves satisfactorily on the holdings allotted to them, and relieve the financial strain in the early stages of settlement.

40. Remissions of rent that fell due up to the 31st March, 1917, were granted to eleven discharged soldiers, the amount remitted being £353. It is, however, anticipated that an amount of approximately £1,600 will be required to meet cases during the current year, and provision is accordingly being made on the estimates to cover such remissions.

PART III.—CONCESSIONS TO MEMBERS OF THE EXPEDITIONARY FORCES.

41. In addition to the provisions of the Discharged Soldiers Settlement Acts of 1915 and 1916, which deal with soldiers discharged from service, legislation has been passed conferring privileges on members of the Expeditionary Forces who are either Crown tenants or desirous of acquiring lands administered by the Crown. By sections 23 and 24 of the Land Laws Amendment Act, 1915, and Part II of the War Legislation Amendment Act, 1916,—

(a.) The Minister is empowered to grant exemption from rent to Crown tenants during their term of service and until six months after discharge.

(b.) The Minister is empowered to grant remission or postpone date of payment of interest falling due on account of balance of purchase-money due under licenses to acquire land on deferred payment from the Crown, and to postpone the due dates of instalments of principal, and extend the terms of such licenses for a period not exceeding three years.

Applications under both of these provisions are considered by the Land Board, which recommends what concession should be granted in each case, and the Minister then decides. The amount actually remitted up to the 31st March, 1917, was £8,092, whilst sixty were granted postponements of rental aggregating £3,183 during the year.

(c.) Members of an Expeditionary Force to receive preference at ballots.

Section 11 of the Land Laws Amendment Act, 1912, amended by section 34 of the Land Laws Amendment Act, 1913, provides that preference at all ballots shall be given to married applicants who have children dependent upon them, and now soldier applicants, though unmarried, are entitled to an equal preference with these married applicants.

(d.) Applications for land may be lodged by an agent.

When application is made for Crown land, a declaration by the applicant as to his eligibility has to accompany the application. The applicant has also to appear personally before the Land Board for examination. The special provisions enact that on production of evidence in writing of appointment, or, failing this, by his own declaration that he has been so appointed, an agent may represent any soldier in these matters.

(e.) Age-limit of applicants for settlement land reduced.

Section 51 of the Land for Settlements Act, 1908, provides that no person under the age of twenty-one years may be an applicant for land, but section 12 of the War Legislation Amendment Act, 1916, states that this provision shall not apply in cases where the applicant has been engaged on military service beyond New Zealand in connection with the present war.

Besides these concessions the Land Boards have relaxed the improvement and residential conditions of the leases of tenants on active service, and in every way give special consideration to their needs whilst absent from their holdings.