

in existence the Auckland Bureau has undoubtedly assisted the local offices in securing satisfactory holdings for the returned soldiers, and it is hoped with the mutual co-operation of Government Departments that the association will in future prove even more beneficial.

19. During the year 97 discharged soldiers selected 71,006 acres of ordinary Crown land, whilst 228 took up 36,110 acres of land that had been purchased by the Crown under the Land for Settlements Act, and 22 were allotted 9,611 acres of national-endowment land. In addition, an educational-endowment lease of 291 acres was allotted to one soldier, so that during the twelve months there was a total addition to settlement under the Act of 348 selectors, occupying 117,018 acres. All the above were lands that had been specially set apart under the Discharged Soldiers Settlement Act, and it must not be overlooked that under section 2 of the 1917 Amendment Act a great number of discharged soldiers have been advanced money to enable them to acquire the freehold of farm lands.

20. At the close of the year under review 896 discharged soldiers had been allotted 357,268 acres of land set apart under the Act, and an additional 185 soldiers had taken up land under other Acts, such as by ballot under the Land Act, and holdings acquired by transfer or otherwise. This makes a grand total of 1,081 soldiers holding 614,537 acres; and it may be noted that Crown tenants who held land prior to their enlisting in the Expeditionary Force comprised 77 selectors, holding 115,137 acres. Full particulars as to the lands held are given in Table 3 of the Appendix. The number of members of the Expeditionary Force, therefore, who have been enabled to obtain holdings, or assisted to retain them, as a result of the passing of the Discharged Soldiers Settlement Act amounted to the following on the 31st March :—

Under the Discharged Soldiers Settlement Act, 1915	..	..	..	896
Under other Acts	..	..	..	185
Held under Land Act prior to enlistment	..	..	..	77
Authorities issued to purchase rural lands	..	..	..	263
Authorities issued to purchase town properties	..	..	..	529

It may be mentioned that at the 30th June, 1919, 3,087 soldiers had advances authorized to them for the acquisition of land or for the various purposes sanctioned by the Act.

SETTLEMENT OF SOLDIERS WITH LIMITED MEANS.

21. It frequently happens that amongst the applicants for land under the Discharged Soldiers Settlement Act there are men who are possessed of little or no capital. Whilst it is difficult and indeed inadvisable to place such men on large holdings needing the expenditure of a fair amount of capital to enable them to be worked in a satisfactory manner, it has always been the endeavour of the Government to settle them on holdings suitable to their experience and means. With this object in view many men have been placed on small dairy farms and provided with the necessary stock and implements to enable them to obtain monetary returns from their holdings from the first month they may enter into possession. On the other hand, when such applicants are in competition with other discharged soldiers for large sections of land for which there are several applicants, the Land Boards may deem it desirable to give preference to those men who are best qualified to work the land to advantage owing to their farming experience and capital at their disposal. However, all classes of soldiers are catered for, and in this connection it may be interesting to quote the following particulars :—

In the Wellington Land District, out of 317 settlers, 79 had no capital when they applied to the Government, whilst 46 had under £50, 82 had between £50 and £100, 96 between £100 and £500, and only 14 had £500 or over. In the Hawke's Bay District, out of 127 soldier settlers, 7 had no cash, 32 possessed under £100, 58 had from £100 to £500, and 30 had over £500. This does not include operations under section 2 of the Discharged Soldiers Settlement Amendment Act, 1917, which further assists soldiers with limited means.

APPOINTMENT OF SUPERVISORS.

22. Owing to increased settlement by returned soldiers and the necessity of ensuring that they work their holdings to the best advantage, the Government decided that, in addition to the assistance and advice which is tendered by the Crown Land Rangers of the Department and by the Stock and Field Inspectors and other expert officers of the Department of Agriculture, the time had arrived when further assistance should be made available, and with this object in view applications have been invited for the positions of Supervisors over Discharged Soldier Settlements.

The duties of such officers will be to keep in constant touch with all discharged soldiers whom the Department has settled on the land, report their requirements to the Commissioner, and assist with advice regarding the choice of suitable stock, plant, fertilizers, seeds, &c., required to farm their holdings in a profitable and satisfactory manner. These appointments were not made during the year under review. Suitable applicants are now being selected who will take up their duties as soon as possible, and in next year's report particulars will be given of the appointments and the work carried out by the Supervisors.

It may be added that whilst no efforts have been spared by officers of the Department in assisting settlers with the best advice possible, undoubtedly the appointments thus made will be of great benefit to soldier settlers.

LEGISLATION.

23. During the year there was no direct amendment to the Discharged Soldiers Settlement Act, but section 18 of the Repatriation Act, 1918, enlarged the scope of the Act by conferring the benefits provided by sections 2 and 3 of the Discharged Soldiers Settlement Amendment Act, 1917, upon all discharged members of an Expeditionary Force who having been classed as medically fit (whether absolutely or contingently) for service beyond the seas, had served as members of that Force in a camp of military training and remained attached to that camp on the 12th November, 1918, the date of cessation of hostilities with Germany. This means that such persons may be advanced money to enable them to acquire land in freehold or Crown leasehold, or to improve or stock their farms. It also enables the Department to finance them in acquiring town residences. The concession has been largely taken advantage of and has been much appreciated.