

SOUTHLAND.

(THOMAS BROOK, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

The work in connection with the settlement of discharged soldiers has considerably increased during the year. This class of work takes precedence, and has occupied a considerable part of the time of most of the officers. Forty-nine soldiers occupy about 14,000 acres of Crown and settlement land, and notwithstanding the severe season experienced the majority are shaping well and should eventually succeed. A large number of soldiers are taking advantage of the provision of the Discharged Soldiers Settlement Amendment Act, 1917, by purchasing freehold properties with the assistance of the Department. At the close of the year thirty-six applicants had been so assisted to purchase an aggregate area of 11,000 acres, and thirty further applications were then under consideration. In addition to the foregoing, advances were authorized for the purchases of town houses in thirty-two cases. This class of applicant is on the increase, and since the close of the year as many as fifty-four cases have been considered at one Board meeting. As mentioned in my general report on the district, the tendency of these operations has been to increase the value of properties considerably, and the increases are very apparent in the town of Invercargill itself. Houses are scarce, and at the present time it is almost impossible to find a suitable house to let. The total amount of money actually paid out from the soldiers' account during the year was over £60,500, while the total receipts were approximately £1,300.

In conclusion I have to say that the staff has experienced probably the most strenuous year on record, but all have worked well and are deserving of commendation.

TABLE 1.

AREA OF LAND PROCLAIMED FOR SETTLEMENT UNDER THE DISCHARGED SOLDIERS SETTLEMENT ACT, 1915.

District.	Under Section 3 of the Act. (Ordinary Tenures.)		Under Section 4 of the Act. (Special Tenures.)		Total Area proclaimed.	
	For the Year ended 31st March, 1919.	Total to 31st March, 1919.	For the Year ended 31st March, 1919.	Total to 31st March, 1919.	For the Year ended 31st March, 1919.	Total to 31st March, 1919.
<i>Ordinary Crown Lands—</i>	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.	Acres.
Auckland	571	25,937	3,033	37,706	3,604	63,643
Hawke's Bay	..	13,812	6,442	64,490	6,442	78,302
Taranaki	..	8,340	5,938	5,938	5,938	14,278
Wellington	..	884	1,624	54,111	1,624	54,995
Nelson	4,127	13,621	..	3,786	4,127	17,407
Marlborough	..	..	2,338	3,530	2,338	3,530
Westland	..	5,959	331	480	331	6,439
Canterbury	..	..	..	253	..	253
Otago	33,008	33,008	230	24,082	33,238	57,090
Southland	..	296	1,754	5,055	1,754	5,351
Totals	37,706	101,857	21,690	199,431	59,396	301,288
<i>Cheviot Estate, Canterbury ..</i>	..	2,097	..	1,356	..	3,453
<i>Land for Settlements—</i>						
Auckland	..	..	8,072	24,268	8,072	24,268
Hawke's Bay	..	..	..	5,445	..	5,445
Taranaki	..	..	632	1,758	632	1,758
Wellington	..	707	792	20,908	792	21,615
Nelson	..	..	..	..	..	..
Marlborough	..	..	..	7,490	..	7,490
Westland	..	..	..	..	..	..
Canterbury	..	44,661	5,691	6,423	5,691	51,084
Otago	..	5,201	648	3,326	648	8,527
Southland	..	745	445	2,542	445	3,287
Totals	..	51,314	16,280	72,160	16,280	123,474
<i>National Endowment—</i>						
Auckland	1,592	8,036	..	..	1,592	8,036
Hawke's Bay	..	..	..	..	..	..
Taranaki	2,625	2,625	..	..	2,625	2,625
Wellington	..	..	..	..	..	..
Nelson	6,753	9,609	..	..	6,753	9,609
Marlborough	..	..	..	..	..	..
Westland	2,694	5,227	..	..	2,694	5,227
Canterbury	18,870	33,640	..	..	18,870	33,640
Otago	..	14,275	..	..	..	14,275
Southland	5,461	6,263	..	..	5,461	6,263
Totals	37,995	79,675	..	..	37,995	79,675
Grand totals	75,701	234,943	37,970	272,947	113,671	507,890