

1920.
NEW ZEALAND.

DEPARTMENT OF LANDS AND SURVEY.
SETTLEMENT OF CROWN LANDS

(SUPPLEMENTARY STATEMENT TO ANNUAL REPORT ON).

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Leave.

SIR,—

Department of Lands and Survey, Wellington, 26th August, 1920.

I have the honour to submit herewith a supplementary statement to the annual report on the settlement of Crown land, which has already been laid before both Houses of the General Assembly (parliamentary paper C.—1).

I have, &c.,
T. N. BRODRICK, Under-Secretary.

The Hon. D. H. Guthrie, Minister of Lands.

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT.

As anticipated in last year's report, the area of 9,000,000 acres provided by section 258 of the Land Act, 1908, as a national endowment for the purposes of education and old-age pensions has now been reached, the approximate area in the endowment at the end of the year under review being 9,018,686 acres. Of this an area of 7,042,630 acres was held on lease or license, subdivided into 4,339 holdings, and providing an annual rental of £130,223. The total revenue received from these lands was £134,614.

LANDS SOLD FOR CASH.

The area of land sold for cash amounted to 3,957 acres, in 253 separate lots, and the price realized was £34,219. The area of town sections totalled 157 acres, with a purchase price of £6,864, while the balance was made up of suburban and rural lands, the latter class covering an area of 3,576 acres and comprising 114 sections purchased by discharged soldiers.

REVALUATIONS OF CROWN LEASEHOLDS.

The total Crown leaseholds revalued in terms of section 15 of the Land Laws Amendment Act, 1915, at the 31st March numbered 432. The capital values were reduced as a result of these valuations from £1,073,079 to £859,189, and the annual rental from £48,687 to £39,091. At the close of the year nine applications remained to be dealt with.

FORFEITURES AND SURRENDERS.

Crown tenants to the number of 206 had their holdings forfeited by Land Boards for non-compliance with the conditions of their leases. The area involved was 79,168 acres and the annual rental £3,892. In addition 108 tenants voluntarily surrendered their leases over an area of 62,018 acres, with an annual rent of £2,585.

REVENUE.

The gross revenue from all sources totalled £1,651,291, which is a record for the Department, and is considerably in excess of the amount collected for the previous year.

REBATES OF RENT.

For prompt payment of rent 19,467 Crown tenants were granted the usual rebate in terms of section 116 of the Land Act, 1908, and section 55 of the Land for Settlements Act, 1908. The amount thus rebated was £50,307.

ARREARS OF RENT.

The rent in arrear at the 31st March amounted to £51,801, which is a somewhat larger sum than shown last year, but this amount is not unduly high compared with the great increase in the revenue. A portion of the arrears is probably due to the fact that many soldier tenants have not yet overcome the initial difficulties to be met with on going on the land and bringing their farms into profit. It is hoped that next year the position may be more satisfactory from a departmental point of view.

RANGERS' INSPECTIONS.

In most districts the time of the Crown Lands Rangers has almost entirely been taken up during the year with work in connection with the settlement of discharged soldiers, including inspections and valuations of properties under section 2 of the Act, valuations of stock, improvements, &c. As a result the ordinary statutory inspections could not be coped with, only urgent ones being made; the others are now some what in arrear. From the reports received from the various land districts, however, it would appear that in the great majority of instances the tenants are honourably fulfilling the conditions of their leases and have effected improvements to a value greatly in excess of the statutory requirements.

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