

LEGISLATION.

Section 34 of the Land Laws Amendment Act, 1920, amended section 3 of the Discharged Soldiers Settlement Amendment Act, 1916, and has the effect of making eligible for any concessions obtainable under the Discharged Soldiers Settlement Act those discharged soldiers who served abroad in some portion of his Majesty's Naval or Military Forces not raised in New Zealand.

The Discharged Soldiers Settlement Loan Act, 1920, empowered the Minister of Finance to borrow money not exceeding £6,000,000 to be placed to the credit of the Discharged Soldiers Settlement Account, and under section 5 of the Imprest Supply Act, 1920, and section 5 of the Imprest Supply Act, 1920 (No. 2), authority was obtained to transfer sums amounting in the aggregate to £1,000,000 from the Consolidated Fund or other account to the Discharged Soldiers Settlement Account.

REGULATIONS.

Various amendments to the regulations issued under the Discharged Soldiers Settlement Act have been made during the past year by Orders in Council. The principal amendments are as follows:—

Mortgages given in security for advances made for the purchase or erection of dwellings must contain a provision that the mortgagor shall reside continuously in such dwelling so long as any portion of the money so advanced remains unpaid.

The provisions of section 15 of the Land Laws Amendment Act, 1915, which enable a lessee or licensee of rural land selected under Part III of the Land Act, 1908, or under the Land for Settlements Act, 1908, to apply for a revaluation of his holding, are extended to lands disposed of under the Discharged Soldiers Settlement Regulations.

Authority is given for making an advance not exceeding £500, and in exceptional cases not exceeding £750, for buildings on rural holdings not exceeding 21 acres in area.

The maximum advance that can be made for the erection of dwellings on other than rural land has been increased from £750 to £900.

Provision has been made for granting to discharged soldiers a rebate of 10 per cent on the interest portion of instalments payable for advances made under section 2 of the Discharged Soldiers Settlement Amendment Act, 1917. Authority is also given for the granting of loans for shorter terms than originally prescribed in regulations; in such special cases as may be approved advances can be made for a term of ten, fifteen, or twenty years.

LANDS OPENED AND AVAILABLE.

During the year an approximate area of 463,504 acres, subdivided into 999 holdings, was offered for selection by discharged soldiers, and balloted for, the bulk of the sections being taken up. Some of the principal blocks which were offered during the year were—

North Auckland: Koremoa and Puni Settlements, containing 4,019 acres; in addition to which 9,549 acres of Crown lands, in fifty-two sections, were offered to soldiers.

Auckland: Rangitaiki, Reparoa, Otamarakau, Orongo, and Pukemapou Settlements, comprising 7,917 acres; in addition to which 58,881 acres of Crown land, in 123 sections, were opened for discharged soldiers.

Hawke's Bay: Repongaere, Ohuku, Omana, Ardkeen, Te Kaihi, Wilder, Paremata, Glengarry, Crownthorpe, and Homebush Settlements, containing altogether 46,468 acres; in addition to which 6,873 acres of Crown land were opened for discharged soldiers. During the year the George Hunter Gift Block was also balloted for and allotted.

Taranaki: Ratapiko, Taitama, Aroheke, Tawhiwhi, Kohura, Marco, Huatoki, Karu, and Huia Settlements, containing altogether 12,309 acres, were opened; and in addition 7,846 acres of Crown land, in forty-five sections, were opened.

Wellington: Akitio and Tuturumuri Settlements, comprising 9,685 acres; whilst approximately 3,755 acres of Crown Land were also offered.

Marlborough: Alberton, Moorlands, Linkwater Dale, Goat Hills, and Bomford Settlements, containing 6,842 acres; whilst 1,482 acres of Crown land were also opened.

Nelson: Blue Glen, Tutaki, and Maruia, containing altogether 18,382 acres; and in addition thirteen sections of Crown land, containing 11,150 acres, were opened.

Canterbury: Riverina, Brooksdale, Springwell, Waitohi, Peaks, Bankfield, Lambrook, Oakwood, Hawthorne, Isleworth, Grange, Broadfields, Dromore, Morten, Lauriston, and Hei Hei Settlements, containing 20,656 acres; some miscellaneous acres of Crown lands were also offered.

Otago: Glenn, Pukenui, Arnmore, Wairuna, Tilverstowe, Poplar Grove, Teviot, containing, with the runs attached to the Teviot Settlement, 83,310 acres; in addition 105,349 acres of Crown land, in forty-three holdings, were offered for discharged soldiers, not including the Teviot Runs.

Southland: Strathvale, containing 837 acres, was offered, and in addition thirty-two miscellaneous, Crown land, and settlement sections, containing 2,674 acres, were opened.

There has been a considerable falling-off in the demand by discharged soldiers for farming lands, and a number of blocks recently offered which were acquired and regarded as being very suitable for soldier-settlement have met with little or no demand on being offered. This has been much more noticeable in the South Island than in the North, where there is still a fairly good demand for first-class dairying-lands.

A large area has been proclaimed as set aside for selection by discharged soldiers, and has been lying open for some considerable time without inquiry, and the Government has therefore decided that the bulk of these lands for which apparently there is no demand is now to be withdrawn from reservation for discharged soldiers only, and opened for application by the general public—preference,