

of course, being given to any discharged soldier who may care to apply when the lands are again opened. It is expected that the bulk of these lands will be offered for general application within the next few months.

As set out in Table 2, it will be seen that the lands allotted under the Discharged Soldiers Settlement Act, 1915, during the year totalled 414,867 acres, subdivided into 1,087 holdings, of which 237,746 acres were selected under the special tenures provided by section 4 of the Act. The total area proclaimed under the Discharged Soldiers Settlement Act up to the 31st March, 1921, is 1,321,091 acres, of which no less than 437,790 acres were proclaimed during the year, and during the same period seventeen estates, comprising 171,898 acres, subdivided into 643 holdings, were offered by ballot.

Owing to the adverse conditions which have been ruling lately with regard to some of the primary farming products, a large number of the tenants have been considerably financially embarrassed, and in order to tide them over the present depression the Government has found it necessary to grant postponements of rent where asked for and where sufficient reason could be shown for this action. Subject to certain conditions it has also released last season's wool-clip from the lien held over it, in all cases where the owner wished to obtain advances from the banks or mercantile firms. This has enabled the soldiers to carry on, and it is hoped they will be able to meet their liabilities with the advent of better prices for stock, &c.

At the present time there are only six acquired estates, totalling 1,724 acres, being prepared for application by discharged soldiers, and the bulk of this will be offered within the next few months.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE.

Under the provisions of the Discharged Soldiers Settlement Act, 1915, the sum of £1,500,000 was raised, and under the Discharged Soldiers Settlement Loans Act, 1920, £13,500,000 was transferred from the Consolidated Fund. The Discharged Soldiers Settlement Loans Act, 1920, also authorized the raising of a further loan of £6,000,000. At the 31st March, 1921, this loan had been subscribed to the extent of £4,239,304.

The advances authorized to discharged soldiers at the close of the financial year totalled £17,941,980, against which advances were actually made to the extent of £16,256,786, leaving a balance of £1,685,196 still to be advanced before commitments are equalized. The following statement illustrates the position of commitments in relation to the borrowing authority:—

Loan authority—						£
Discharged Soldiers Settlement Act, 1915	..	..	..	..	..	1,500,000
Discharged Soldiers Settlement Loans Act, 1920	..	..	..	..	..	13,500,000
						15,000,000
Discharged Soldiers Settlement Loans Act, 1920 (on account of						
£6,000,000 loan)	..	..	..	..	..	4,239,304
						19,239,304
Commitments ..	..	..	..	..	..	17,941,980
Balance available for further authorization on 1st April,						
1921 ..	..	..	..	..	..	1,297,324

The Discharged Soldiers Settlement Loans Act, 1920, section 8, authorized the transfer of £12,500,000 from the Consolidated Fund and the cancellation of debentures issued in respect of moneys borrowed from this fund. The transfer, however, remains a liability to the Consolidated Fund as if borrowed under the provisions of the Discharged Soldiers Settlement Act, 1915. In addition, section 31 of the Appropriation Act, 1920, authorized the transfer of £1,000,000 from the Consolidated Fund as an investment in the Discharged Soldiers Settlement Account. The expenses of the transfer and of the raising of the amount subscribed to the additional loan of £6,000,000 totalled £212,805 Os. 7d.

Section 30 of the Appropriation Act, 1920, authorizes the transfer from the War Expenses Account of such sums as may be deemed fit for purposes of investment in the Discharged Soldiers Settlement Account with interest at 4 per cent. So far no transfer has been made.

Advances made on current Account to assist settlers in the purchase of stock and in effecting improvements to their lands during the year under review amounted to £1,374,691, which, together with advances during previous years, makes a total of £2,390,740 advanced under this heading. The balance outstanding at the 31st March, 1921, was £2,134,309.

Advances made on the security of farms, market gardens, orchards, &c., on freehold Crown or Native leasehold lands during the year amounted to £3,424,580, which together with £4,855,457 advanced during previous years makes the total under this authority £8,280,037. The balance outstanding at the 31st March was £8,061,464.

With reference to advances for the purchase and erection of dwellings in urban and suburban areas £2,598,341 was advanced during the year, which, together with £2,987,668 advanced during previous years, makes the total under this authority £5,586,009. The balance outstanding at the 31st March was £5,140,703. It is still noticeable that a number of soldiers have applied for and have received advances for the purchase of suburban properties, which they utilize in their spare time as small market-gardens, poultry-farms, &c., to supplement their incomes.

During the year under review it was seen that if commitments continued at the then rate the financial authority would be exhausted in a very short time. Cabinet then decided that loans to assist