

construction works in the Hall-Jones Settlement will be completed by the Lower Hutt Borough Council during the early part of this year, which will enable forty-one allotments, varying between 1 and 3 acres, to be offered. The older-established estates continue in a sound condition, though the farmers have experienced a severe set-back, for the reasons stated in the commencement of this report.

MARLBOROUGH.

(J. COOK, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

No further estates were acquired during the year. Bomford Settlement, 133 acres, was disposed of as one holding. There are now twenty-one settlements in the district, with 488 lessees. The crops on the Moorlands and Alberton Settlements, disposed of last year, have been very satisfactory, and had even average prices been obtained the lessees would have had a really prosperous year.

NELSON.

(H. D. McKELLAR, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

No new settlements were acquired during the year under review, and quite a number of allotments in previously acquired estates failed to attract applicants. The older-established settlements, with the exception of Lake Settlement, are quite successful. It has been decided to group the three unoccupied sections in Lake Settlement, and it seems probable that they will soon be taken up. Matakītaki Settlement has been leased for grazing until the 30th June, 1924, and an effort is being made to deal similarly with the unselected sections in Maruia and Tutaki Settlements.

WESTLAND.

(R. S. GALBRAITH, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

Kokatahi and Poerua are the only settlements at present in Westland; both have been in existence for a number of years. The settlers are engaged chiefly in dairying, and in spite of the present depression in prices are generally in a satisfactory position.

CANTERBURY.

(G. H. BULLARD, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

The total number of estates settled in this district is now 138, comprising an area of 604,600 acres, and bringing in an annual rental of £175,000. All the older-established settlements are doing well, and are not feeling the effects of the slump much. Those more lately settled are feeling it more, but with present prospects should in the main come out well enough in the future.

OTAGO.

(R. T. SADD, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

Since the 1st April, 1921, the Kelso Settlement, near Heriot, 723 acres of dairying-land, was offered for selection, and four out of the five holdings are now selected, with good prospects of success. Pukeawa Settlement, near Balclutha—area, 2,737 acres, in fourteen sections—has still two sections unselected, and as this is excellent land suitable for dairying or cropping it should provide fair livings to the selectors. The settlements of Pukenui, Glenn, Arnmore, and Tilvestowe, in North Otago, are progressing in a satisfactory manner. Gladbrook and Poplar Grove, near Middelmarsh, have experienced a very dry season, consequently the returns from dairying and cropping are poor. Crosshill and Melville Park, near Mosgiel, have not been very successful. With the exception of two sections offered to the public, all the above have been selected by discharged soldiers. With the exception of Waitahuna No. 1 Settlement, all the older-established settlements are making fair to good progress, and now that the prices of stock and produce are improving the prospects are much brighter.

SOUTHLAND.

(THOMAS BROOK, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

No estates were purchased under the Land for Settlements Act during the past year. The settlements acquired since 1915 have been disposed of under the Discharged Soldiers Settlement Act, and are dealt with under that heading.

This year is one of the worst that the old-established settlers have had, and the present-day difficulties are pressing most heavily on those who occupy the lower-priced lands where the renewing of pastures must be undertaken at short intervals. The cost of this work has been materially increased by the rise in the cost of fertilizers and other farm requisites, and is proving a heavy tax on those engaged in agriculture.