

As was to be expected, the late feeling of uncertainty regarding stability of products and values has made the Board conservative in its purchases.

The Land for Settlements Department has now been merged with the Lands and Survey Department, the Under-Secretary for Lands becoming Land Purchase Controller and Chairman of the Dominion Land Purchase Board.

Mr. R. A. Rodger has been appointed as Land Purchase Inspector, and his varied experience and sound knowledge of farming economics should prove of great value in future operations.

It is with regret that the retirement of Mr. J. D. Ritchie as Land Purchase Controller has to be chronicled, after many arduous years of official life. Mr. Ritchie joined the Government service in April, 1891, as Chief Inspector of Stock, and a year later was appointed as the first Secretary of the Department of Agriculture. In 1909 Mr. Ritchie was appointed Permanent Head of the Land for Settlements Department, which he controlled with conspicuous ability. Mr. Ritchie's labours on behalf of his country have the appreciation of all those who came in contact with him, and did much to advance the settlement of the Dominion.

Proposals regarding legislation now under consideration will, if brought down, be of very considerable assistance in promoting land-settlement and improving the position of the settlers who come under the provisions of the Land for Settlements Act.

Tables are appended summarizing the properties considered and acquired during the year, and showing the moneys received into and paid out of the Land for Settlements Account.

I have, &c.,

J. B. THOMPSON,

The Hon. the Minister of Lands.

Land Purchase Controller.

TABLE A.—NUMBER OF PROPERTIES CONSIDERED DURING THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH, 1927.

Land District.	Number.	Area of Estates offered.	Land District.	Number.	Area of Estates offered.
		Acres.			Acres.
Auckland*	20	22,043	Westland	..	..
Hawke's Bay† .. .	9	15,873	Canterbury .. .	5	17,170
Taranaki	2	2,752	Otago	1	635
Wellington	8	18,040	Southland	3	2,419
Marlborough	2	1,653			
Nelson	1	80	Totals	51	80,665

* Includes North Auckland.

† Includes Gisborne.

TABLE B.—SUMMARY OF ESTATES ACQUIRED UP TO THE 31ST MARCH, 1927.

Land District.	Number.	Area.	Purchase-money.
		Acres.	£
Auckland*	99	390,733	1,529,768
Hawke's Bay† .. .	63	311,426	2,356,804
Taranaki	25	27,628	369,818
Wellington	146	158,626	2,249,043
Marlborough	22	224,090	755,482
Nelson	14	48,821	150,473
Westland	2	5,125	8,343
Canterbury	173	447,596	3,444,747
Otago	73	293,188	1,779,317
Southland	25	90,637	457,786
Totals	642	1,997,870	13,101,581

* Includes North Auckland.

† Includes Gisborne.