

APPENDIX.

REPORTS OF COMMISSIONERS OF CROWN LANDS.

NORTH AUCKLAND.

(O. N. CAMPBELL, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

THE condition of the soldier settlers is somewhat similar to that of the Crown tenant with the exception that, as a result of the operations of the Revaluation Board, the majority of them have been placed on a footing which under ordinary market conditions would ensure success. In view of the low payments for butterfat during the past year it has been found in the majority of those cases where the Department is receiving $33\frac{1}{3}$ per cent. of the settler's cream cheques that the proceeds have proved insufficient to meet interest and rental charges. This will probably result in postponements having to be granted to enable them to complete their requirements for the top-dressing manures essential to maintain their usual production for the ensuing year.

A noticeable improvement exists in regard to the general tendency of soldier settlers to take the Board into their confidence in regard to their farming and financial affairs, a factor which has proved of great assistance in solving the difficulties of the individual cases.

Great difficulty has been experienced in connection with small farmlets in or about the suburban areas, as in most cases they are not self-supporting propositions and the soldier is generally compelled to obtain outside casual employment to meet his obligations. Although these properties are not payable propositions as farmlets, their value is being enhanced on account of the improved transport facilities bringing them within easy range of the city.

In the face of adverse conditions prevailing during the year it is not yet possible to gauge the effects of the revaluation.

Applications under the Discharged Soldiers Settlement Act.—During the year the applications received numbered 851, which were made up of—postponements, 229; purchase of farms, 5; transfer of farms, 61; additional advances for erection of houses, 30; transfer of houses, 135; and letting houses, 24.

Movement in connection with transfer of houses still continues, but not on such a large scale as in the previous year.

The total amount recommended on Current Account was £16,674. Up to date the number of dwellings abandoned was 115, of which 82 have been disposed of, and the majority of the balance have been let pending disposal.

Farms.—222 farms have come into the hands of the Department since the inception of the scheme, and of this number 184 have been disposed of, and the balance remaining on hand are being revalued with a view to sale.

AUCKLAND.

(K. M. GRAHAM, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

Steady development and progress continues to be made in the majority of cases coming within the administration of the Discharged Soldiers Settlement Act, and, despite adverse conditions which have in a number of cases still to be overcome by hard work and expenditure, the discharged-soldiers-settlement scheme may be said to be on the whole in a satisfactory and sound position. The investigation of Current Accounts has now been practically completed, and as far as possible adjustments and concessions have been made in a determined effort to place each settler in a position to successfully carry on, and at the same time meet his future interest payments to the Department as these become due.

Owing to the copious rainfall experienced by this district throughout the year there has been an abundance of feed for stock of all classes, and though prices for farm-produce have not altogether come up to expectations, stock have been kept in good condition, and there is no danger of shortage of pasture during the remainder of the season.

The cold and wet spring adversely affected dairy returns at the commencement of the season, but any loss has been more than made up by the vigorous growth of grass during the summer, and in point of production alone the indications are that the output of butter and cheese over the whole season will constitute a new record.

This increase in actual production will, it is hoped, largely compensate the settlers for lower advances or payments by the factories, and should reflect favourably upon the Discharged Soldiers Settlement Account when the dairying season has come to a close.

The several amounts of loans and advances outstanding at the end of this year are as follows: Farms, £898,555; dwellings, £402,874; Current Account, £668,726.