

APPENDIX.

REPORTS OF COMMISSIONERS OF CROWN LANDS.

NORTH AUCKLAND.

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

THE position with regard to the small farmlets in and around Auckland City is greatly improving, and no difficulty has been experienced in disposing of any of these propositions which have reverted to the Crown.

The interest payments received for the year reflected the unemployment problem of the city. It is noticeable that, while the Current Account and farm propositions show increased receipts, payments on dwellings fail to attain previous year's figures. Fewer applications for transfers have been dealt with both in respect to farms and dwellings. As a result of the reductions given by the Dominion Revaluation Board, the majority of soldier farmers are now quite contented, and many of them are firmly established. With very few exceptions all our remaining soldier settlers are out to "make good" on the land, and unless markets slump I feel sure that with a little further assistance here and there practically all will win through. With the dwellings, the transfers were principally in cases where financial necessity compelled the mortgagor to divest himself of his obligations.

Applications under the Discharged Soldiers Settlement Act.—During the year the applications received numbered 546, which were made up of:—postponements, 41; purchase of farms, 2; transfer of farms, 57; additional advances for erection of houses, 9; transfer of houses, 92; and letting houses, 29; and for house extension, 24. Number of houses on hand for sale, 28.

The amount recommended on Current Account was £24,535.

Since the commencement of the Discharged Soldiers Settlement Act, 258 farms have come into the hands of the Department. Of this number 242 have been either sold or leased, and there is at present on hand available for selection 16.

AUCKLAND.

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

With the exception of a number of soldier settlers here and there on the lighter lands of this district, which suffered severely from the effects of the midsummer drought, soldier settlement on the whole has continued throughout the year to make sound progress towards that inevitable state of stability which adjustments of land and mortgage values, combined with the brighter prospects ahead for the farming community as a whole, have made possible, providing the settler himself exercises industry and thrift, and works his farm in accordance with the best accepted methods of modern farming and soil culture.

But for the break in the season the returns from dairying would have totally eclipsed all previous records; but despite the falling-off of returns it is even now expected that a favourable autumn will do much to retrieve the losses due directly to the drought months, and that most of the settlers will be able to redeem some of their back debts, which were largely incurred in the early years of soldier settlement, and that others, harder hit, will at least finish up the season showing no actual decrease in returns as compared with their receipts of last year.

A large number of the settlers went in for pigs this year as a side-line, but so far prices have not produced the profits anticipated, but, though the result is disappointing, there is no reason to doubt that with careful management and feeding the pig must increasingly become a necessary and valuable adjunct to the small dairy farm if the greatest possible return is to be achieved.

Applications under the Soldiers Settlement Act have been confined to transfers, advances on Current Account, and to a lesser extent to further postponements or relief of that nature, and every possible consideration has been given to all cases coming before the Land Board in this latter connection.

The several amounts of loans and advances outstanding at the end of this financial year are as follows: Farms, £868,039; dwellings, £385,800; Current Account, £614,553.

GISBORNE.

(E. H. FARNIE, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

The great majority of the soldier settlers in this district have done very well. Forfeitures were few, and the remaining soldier settlers should not have any difficulty in making good. The Wharekaka settlers had a good season. One settler with only three extra cows had 2,000 lb. butterfat over the returns from the previous season, and this applied generally. The increase was the result of top-dressing and the provision of an adequate water-supply. The settlement did not feel the drought in January and February.

On the Paremata Settlement the milk returns decreased in January and February, but have recovered since. The settlers have not done the same amount of top-dressing, as those on the Wharekaka Settlement, and the land dries up much quicker. The last season's butterfat average was about 1s. 3½d., and this season should be about 1s. 4d. There is plenty of feed everywhere on these two settlements, and the stock are in good condition.