

Tobacco-growing.—A total area of 36 acres was planted out in tobacco-plants. The crops grew well, and from reports the product is very good, but there is no market. The experiment has illustrated that the leaf can be grown in Marlborough, and it should prove a lucrative venture when a market is established.

Poultry.—The local egg circle handled approximately 1,400,000 eggs from 230 suppliers, this being an increase in supplies and suppliers. The average price works out at 1s. 8d. per dozen.

Lime-works.—One plant is operating at Ward, where the price on trucks is 25s. per ton. The output is roughly 500 tons per annum. The supply could be greatly increased, but demand is low on account of limited rail service, the cost of carriage to the farm being too great for the average farmer.

Land Board.—Twelve ordinary meetings were held during the year. I tender my thanks to the members for their co-operation and earnest consideration to all matters that have required their attention during the year.

WESTLAND.

(W. T. MORPETH, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

Conditions and Progress of Settlement.—The farmers this year have had quite a good season. Weather conditions were not quite so favourable as last year, but on the whole they have been good, and there has been a plentiful yield of milk and an abundance of grass, while in some localities considerable quantities of hay have been saved. A fair amount of liming and top-dressing has been done, but there is still a very considerable area of land held in private ownership which is not producing anything like up to its full capacity.

Lime-works.—The lime-works at Kowhitirangi and Ross are still in active operation.

Timber.—Conditions in the timber industry appear to be improving. The total output of sawn timber for the year was 70,450,400 superficial feet, an increase of 13,000,600 ft. on last year's figures. Of this total, 28,082,300 ft. were cut from Warden's licenses, 2,625,200 ft. from Crown land, 24,435,600 ft. from freehold, and the balance, 15,307,300 ft., from State forests. The quantity of timber exported overseas amounted to 21,718,000 ft., an increase of nearly 6,000,000 ft. on last year's export. A total of 32,092,800 ft. passed through Otira Tunnel.

In addition to the sawn timber, 481,200 silver-pine posts, poles, strainers, and sleepers were railed to Christchurch, and 820 trucks of props and bars, chiefly beech, were supplied to the coal-mines.

Flax.—The four flax-mills mentioned in last year's report are still carrying on. Two additional companies are being formed for the purpose of developing Grove's Swamp and Rotokino Swamp respectively. If these concerns materialize, both will employ a large number of men, and produce a considerable amount of fibre. It is stated by experts that the quality of the leaf grown in this district is exceptionally good.

Revenue.—The total revenue for the year, including the Discharged Soldiers Settlement Account, amounted to £25,822. Land revenue amounted to £14,480.

Gold-mining.—The largest concern of this nature in the district is the Rimu Gold-dredging Co. of America. During the year the company dredged 30 acres of fresh country, excavated 1,843,357 cubic yards of material, and won gold to the value of £54,402. Another dredging concern has been established at the Five-mile Beach, south of Okarito. Rich prospects have been obtained, and the company will shortly be in active operation. The Hohonu Gold-sluicing Co. and the Skippers Westland Gold-mining Co. are also in operation, besides a number of small one-man or two-men sluicing claims.

Land Board.—Twelve monthly meetings were held, as scheduled, during the year. The Board dealt with 175 applications for land, 108 transfers, 23 exchanges, 33 applications by returned soldiers for advances, transfers, postponements, and remissions, and 163 timber licenses, together with the usual volume of miscellaneous work.

CANTERBURY.

(W. STEWART, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

Canterbury has had weather conditions this year that have suited a large proportion of her area, and this, in conjunction with fair prices, has given the farming community a good year. Owing to a fine winter, stock generally were carried through in good condition; and although the spring was rather wet, this was not bad enough to cause serious losses.

Pastoralists generally have had a favourable season, for, although prices for wool and lambs have not been quite so buoyant, yet they have been payable to the farmer who is on reasonable-priced land and is managing capably. The relative drop in merino wool as compared with half-bred has allowed those in need of merino ewes for back-country stations to purchase at more reasonable figures than have been ruling for some years past. Lambing and weight of clip have been quite up to average years. There is the promise of a good autumn growth of grass, and stock should again go into the winter in good condition.

Shelter-planting conditions, which were relaxed during the war and immediately thereafter, are now being more strictly enforced. The last few favourable seasons have induced more experimentation in surface sowing, in top-dressing, and in improvement of pastures generally, which has also been