

GENERAL.

The past year has been a good one from the point of view of farmers. Weather and market conditions have been fair, and there have been no undue influences to offset the general good effect which fair seasons and prices bring about. Soldier settlers generally have shared in the benefits which these conditions promote, and an increased number of them have now reached that desirable point when they may look forward to a more enjoyable prospect and an increased measure of merited reward. Nevertheless it must be admitted that there is a small proportion of settlers who for various reasons cannot be classed in this category, and such cases will require careful nursing for a time.

In many cases in the past the Department has been obliged to postpone or remit interest charges in order to assist occupiers to bring their properties up to that stage of development where the productive capacity will be sufficient to support the settler. Assistance in this way, combined with a prudent system of advances on mortgage, has in most cases been effective in achieving successful results.

LANDS PROCLAIMED.

The lands set apart for selection by discharged soldiers during the year totalled 3,091 acres, making a grand total of 1,437,628 acres proclaimed since the inception of the scheme. This large area is made up as follows :—

Class of Land.	Area (Acres).
Ordinary Crown land	602,531
Land-for-settlements land	400,490
National-endowment land	431,251
Cheviot Estate land	3,356
	1,437,628

Proclamations have been issued revoking the setting-apart of 220,316 acres of Crown land and 95,723 acres of land-for-settlements land.

APPLICATIONS FOR LAND.

Applications for land under the Discharged Soldiers Settlement Act, 1915, to the number of ninety were received during the year. The following table gives the number of applications and the area allotted for each year from the inception of the soldier-settlement scheme :—

Year ending	Applications received.	Allotments made.	
		Number.	Area (Acres).
31st March, 1916	272	2	629
.. 1917	522	319	143,524
.. 1918	513	313	103,362
.. 1919	1,379	348	117,018
.. 1920	5,041	932	403,891
.. 1921	5,396	1,087	414,867
.. 1922	878	403	97,972
.. 1923	284	146	25,113
.. 1924	216	79	16,910
.. 1925	123	47	9,014
.. 1926	109	86	20,500
.. 1927	78	66	17,412
.. 1928	96	60	15,695
.. 1929	90	77	13,275
Totals for fourteen years	14,997	3,965	1,399,182

J. B. THOMPSON, Under-Secretary.