

APPENDIX.

EXTRACTS FROM REPORTS OF COMMISSIONERS OF CROWN LANDS.

NORTH AUCKLAND.

(W. D. ARMIT, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

A SUBSTANTIAL improvement over the previous twelve months must be recorded for the past year. This improvement has been gradual and has been maintained over the past four seasons, showing that soldier settlers have done their share in combating the slump conditions. The improved meat and wool returns enabled numbers of grazier settlers to meet their full commitments.

Dairy-farm accounts showed a decided improvement, especially south of Auckland, where drought conditions in the previous twelve months caused severe loss. This year a normal season was experienced in this locality. In North Auckland the severe flooding and continuous rains caused loss and inconvenience. Hay crops were difficult to save, and ensilage has been stacked to a larger extent. The Department has assisted with revenue refunds for purchase of fertilizer in a great number of cases, and in others close budgetary co-operation has enabled farms to be maintained, and charges partially met after providing reasonable living expenses. Pig-husbandry has again proved of great assistance in income earning, although in some districts, such as the Ruawai Flats, the cold winter, wet spring, and pugged soil conditions caused heavy mortality among pigs.

It may be said that soldier settlers have co-operated with the Department as usual, and done their best to meet commitments this season with a greater measure of success than has been possible for several years past. During the year certain rural properties have been abandoned to the Department through inability of soldier settlers on account of failing health to carry on with farming operations. This aspect of soldier settlement requires close and sympathetic consideration.

City dwelling accounts have also improved to a certain extent. No difficulty is experienced in letting house property which is in reasonable order and reverted to the Department through default or abandonment by the mortgagor. Repairs and renovations have been carried out to a large extent during the year. Fewer houses are now reverting to the Department, and a number of sales have been effected during the past twelve months of properties which have been previously "bought in."

AUCKLAND.

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

Soldier settlers throughout the district have experienced a much better period this year than for several seasons past. Improved returns were the rule, the cause being the very favourable season as far as weather was concerned and the increased price for farm products. In particular dairy-farmers improved their position, as the payouts over last season showed an increase of about 2d. per pound for butterfat. Sheep-farmers also realized good prices for their lambs and wool.

The soldier settlers as a whole are still making an honest endeavour to meet their responsibilities to the Crown, and, speaking generally, they are succeeding. In a few instances, however, it has been found necessary for the Board to afford some measure of relief.

As far as house properties are concerned it is still being found necessary to capitalize arrears in some cases and to effect mortgage adjustments.

HAWKE'S BAY.

(F. R. BURNLEY, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

Soldier settlers generally have had a better season with the improvement in market prices.

Orchardists through inclement weather have again had a poor season.

The majority of those settlers in arrears have made a good effort to pay, and, by suspension of principal and capitalization, in many cases the weight of arrears has been lifted.

Hunter Soldiers' Assistance Trust Board.—The Board held three meetings during the year and dealt with 115 cases, the majority being applications for assistance for orphans.

Grants amounting to £1,015 were made to 207 children.

Loans approved amount to £1,070, eight persons being assisted.

The activities of the Board are becoming more widely known, and applications for assistance of orphans are being received from many parts of the Dominion.