

## COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS, CHRISTCHURCH

Ten blocks, totalling 17,317 acres, were being farmed and developed as at 31st March, 1945. A further twenty-six properties, totalling 39,933 acres, were purchased, acquired, or set aside for development during the year, and nineteen units, totalling 10,489 acres, were allotted on permanent tenure, leaving 46,761 acres under development as at 31st March, 1946. Twenty-three ex-servicemen are in employment on wages with the right to permanent tenure.

Better progress is now being made with erection of buildings, though in South Canterbury there is still great difficulty in securing contractors. Shortage of fencing-wire and of fertilizer for top-dressing is retarding progress.

Exceptional weather conditions were experienced. A wet late autumn in 1945 seriously reduced the area of autumn-sown wheat and caused heavy losses of potatoes. In July a nor'west gale of exceptional severity followed by a snowfall of up to 24 in. on the plains caused widespread damage to plantations and to some old buildings. The nor'west gale was repeated on 31st August, again with heavy damage. From mid-December till the end of February dry conditions were experienced and feed crops suffered, and it was not until April that adequate rain fell. Wool weights are less than usual and lambs on many blocks have been slow to fatten.

*Motunau Block* (3,094 Acres), (Locality : Motunau).—During the year roading and water-supply reticulation has been completed. Three new houses are under construction and some eight miles of fencing has been erected during the year. Receipts on this block from fat lambs, fat cattle, wool, and grain have this year been substantial. It is hoped that the building programme will be sufficiently far advanced for the block to be offered on permanent tenure in the 1947 autumn.

*Broadfields-Woodlawn Block* (624 Acres), (Locality : Prebbleton).—During the year one unit of 264 acres was balloted and settled by an ex-serviceman. Development on the balance of 360 acres has continued and further permanent pasture is being established. It should be ready for offering in the 1947 autumn.

*Mains Block* (485 Acres), (Locality : Dunsandel).—Three ex-servicemen are employed on wages on this newly acquired block, and the two dairy units and the one sheep and crop unit provided for in the scheme of subdivision will be allotted on permanent tenure when the building programme has been completed.

*Lowry Hills* (6,416 Acres), (Locality : Cheviot).—This block was occupied during the year by three ex-servicemen employed on wages, and the three sheep-grazing units will be allotted to them on permanent tenure as from the 1st April. One new dwelling remains to be erected. Satisfactory returns for surplus sheep and wool were received during the year.

*Cheviot Hills* (5,001 Acres), (Locality : Cheviot).—Possession was taken of this block on the 28th February. The scheme of subdivision provides for one dairy and four sheep units. Four ex-servicemen are employed on wages. A contract has been let for two new dwellings.

*Port Levy Farm Settlement* (2,650 Acres), (Locality : Port Levy).—This block recently acquired, will provide four sheep units. A little fencing, one new dwelling, and some building renovations are the only development work required, and early offering on permanent tenure is anticipated.

*Lowland Lees* (670 Acres), (Locality : West Eyreton).—This block was recently acquired and will provide two sheep and cropping units. An ex-serviceman Manager is employed.

*Ashton* (703 Acres), (Locality : Ashburton).—An ex-serviceman settler was installed on this block on permanent tenure on the 16th April.

*Lauriston Block* (329 Acres), (Locality : Lauriston).—This block is uneconomic. Endeavours are being made to acquire further land. More progress will be made when irrigation water is available.