

COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS, NELSON

The limited scope in the Nelson District for closer settlement is reflected in the purchases for the year. It was possible to acquire only two properties—one by negotiation, the other being taken under the provisions of section 51 of the Servicemen's Settlement and Land Sales Act, 1943. Negotiations are proceeding for the purchase of two further blocks, with every prospect of success. The search for areas capable of subdivision is continuing, particular attention being given to land suited to the growing of tobacco. It is evident, however, that there is little prospect of securing any large areas of Grade 1 or 2 tobacco land—these are, in the main, intensively farmed at present—and the search has been extended to the heavier lands graded 3 and 4.

Seven single-unit properties were acquired under the provisions of section 51 of the Servicemen's Settlement and Land Sales Act, and immediately disposed of to ex-servicemen, one selected on renewable lease, the others deciding in favour of agreement for sale and purchase.

Organ's Block (Westport).—Area, 698 acres. Development commenced, 1940. This area was set apart for development under the Small Farms Act in October, 1940, but results did not reach expectations, and in February, 1947, a decision was made to dispose of the block as a single unit under the provisions of the Land Act, 1924. The selector was an ex-serviceman.

Pakihi Block (Westport).—Area, 1,594 acres. Development commenced, 1935. The development of this typical pakihi-country land was started in 1935 to test the possibilities of this class of land under actual farming conditions. The Cawthorn Institute acted in an advisory capacity. The results were not satisfactory, leading to a decision to discontinue the experiment, which nevertheless was fully justified, having regard to the extensive area of the pakihis. If a satisfactory means of developing and farming the areas could have been found, Westport and the dominion as a whole would have stood to gain. It cannot yet be said that the pakihis are useless from a farming point of view. The steady advance in agricultural science might produce a solution of the problem. In the meantime, use is being made of the pastures established and several tenancies have been granted.

Four Rivers Farm Settlement (Murchison).—Area, 220 acres. Purchased, 31st August, 1946. Subdivided, two dairy-farms. Two prospective settlers are working the block under a share-milking agreement pending the completion of the extra buildings necessary. These are now in course of erection and the ex-servicemen should be able to start out on their own at the commencement of next season.

Saxton Farm Settlement (Stoke).—Area, 76 acres. Acquired, 4th June, 1946. For subdivision into farnlets or workers' home sites. One unit of 4 acres has been disposed of to a disabled serviceman, who is establishing himself as a market-gardener. The grazing of the balance has been made available to two other ex-servicemen pending the erection of a new house and cow-shed. When these are completed a town-milk-supply unit will be established for an ex-serviceman until such time as conditions justify closer subdivision.

COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS, HOKITIKA

Whitcombe Farm Settlement (Locality: Koiterangi).—Area, 351 acres. Date of possession, 2nd December, 1946. Subdivisions, three dairy-farms. When taken over the pastures on this property were poor, having been down for many years, and a programme of pasture renewal is being proceeded with. It will be necessary to construct two new dwellings. In the meantime the property is being worked by the Department and an "A" Grade ex-serviceman is acting as farm-manager, assisted by a farm trainee.

COMMISSIONER OF CROWN LANDS, CHRISTCHURCH

As at 31st March, 1947, there were thirty blocks under development totalling approximately 60,000 acres and estimated to provide 110 economic holdings (including 25 on Valetta). During the year, twenty-one ex-servicemen were allotted units on permanent tenure, and a further twenty-six ex-servicemen are employed on wages with a right to permanent tenure when development programmes are completed.