

of the others, situated in the Ronga Valley, suitable for dairy-farming, have also been taken up, and five sections in the Erina Settlement have also been selected.

Apparently there does not seem to be much demand for land in this district by discharged soldiers, as, although there have been a number of inquiries, they have gone no further in the matter.

NELSON.

(F. A. THOMPSON, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

During the year eleven applications were received from returned soldiers, two of whom were allotted land under the Discharged Soldiers Settlement Act, and the greatest care was taken to see that they satisfied themselves by personal inspection as to the suitability of the land selected. In addition, three soldiers acquired 10,500 acres under the Land Act, and another took over a Crown tenant's holding.

It must be borne in mind that many of the invalided men are as yet hardly fit to undertake the strenuous work of taking up new land, and at the same time the land available for all but the strongest is indeed limited in extent. It may be possible in the near future to acquire further land suitable for subdivision into pastoral as well as fruit farms, and the Land Purchase Board has this under consideration.

In addition to current applications now disposed of in individual areas, an area of some 24,000 acres comprised in the Rainy River and Slips Blocks is being prepared for offering.

WESTLAND.

(THOMAS BROOK, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

No land has yet been disposed of to discharged soldiers, but areas aggregating 6,505 acres have been set apart for the purpose, and will be available for selection during the coming year. The Bell Hill Block, adjacent to the Greymouth—Otira Railway, forms the greatest part of this area, and grass-seed is now being sown on portions of it which were burnt during the summer.

CANTERBURY.

(W. H. SKINNER, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

Four estates, partly acquired and partly Crown lands, have been submitted for selection by discharged soldiers: eight sections in Cricklewood, near Fairlie, areas ranging from 145 acres to 391 acres of agricultural land, two of which have so far been selected; nine sections in the Seaforth Settlement, near Temuka, the areas ranging from 14 acres to 105 acres, not yet disposed of; two were taken up but subsequently relinquished. 82 acres of wheat and 50 acres of oats which were on the land when purchased were harvested. The wheat averaged 48 bushels and the oats about 56 bushels to the acre. Clayton, near Fairlie, subdivided into five sections of sheep-country with areas from 800 acres to 3,580 acres, and having an altitude 1,400 ft. to 1,700 ft., was all selected. Lees Valley, Upper Ashley district: eight sections were offered and seven taken up, all small sheep-runs, with an altitude from 1,400 ft. to 3,000 ft., and areas from 2,500 acres to 3,900 acres. Two small sections, one at Hornby of 3 acres and another at Drayton of 10 acres, have not yet found a selector.

So far the selections already made indicate a choice for sheep-farming, and that small agricultural and dairy farms are not in favour. Still, it is too early to arrive at a decision as to the advisability of recommending any particular class of land.

OTAGO.

(ROBERT T. SADD, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

So far there has been a very limited demand for land by discharged soldiers, and in most cases their capital is also very limited. Out of the fifteen sections set apart on the Benmore Runs there are still four unselected. Two runs at Tarras were also selected by discharged soldiers. On Clifton Settlement only three sections were allotted out of twenty-two. There have been a few inquiries for small areas on Earnsclough and Galloway Flats, but owing to water for irrigation not being available these lands cannot at present be worked to advantage.

The lands allotted to discharged soldiers have not been held long enough to judge of the prospects of the settlers. The high prices ruling for stock, and the enormous increase in the price of fencing-material, is a great drawback to the settlement of the land.

SOUTHLAND.

(H. D. M. HASZARD, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

During the year thirteen discharged soldiers have been settled on the land. All are working hard on their holdings and are shaping well. With the financial assistance rendered by the Government they should eventually become prosperous tenants.

Lamont Settlement was purchased and subdivided into five sections, four of which have been selected. The other nine are on worked-out bush lands of good quality. All settlers are of a good class. Another estate has been purchased, and will be opened during the coming year. It consists of first-class dairying land, and will be subdivided into suitable holdings.