

SESSION II.
1918.
NEW ZEALAND

LAND FOR SETTLEMENTS ACT, 1908

(REPORT ON THE).

Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly in compliance with Section 85 of the Land for Settlements Act, 1908.

The LAND PURCHASE INSPECTOR and CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF LAND PURCHASE COMMISSIONERS
to the MINISTER OF LANDS.

SIR,—

Wellington, 30th September, 1918.

I have the honour to submit the report of the Department for the year ending the 31st March, 1918.

Land for Settlements.

The operations of the Department have been entirely confined to the purchase of lands for discharged soldiers.

The number of properties considered during the year was 499, of an area of 451,935 acres. This is very much below that of last year, but still much above the average. The properties were widely distributed, and none were of any great extent. As usual, many were found to be quite unsuitable, and the prices asked were in several instances nearly double the taxable value.

There has been a considerable number of single farms purchased for discharged soldiers, under section 3, Discharged Soldiers Settlement Amendment Act, 1917. The bulk of these, however, have been taken up since the 1st April.

The area purchased for selection during the year was 40,296 acres, at a cost of £440,296, and for individual soldiers 481 acres, at a cost of £6,700. Since the 1st April to date there have been further areas secured (*vide* Table G), amounting to 26,812 acres, at a cost of £399,736 for selection, and 5,920 acres, amounting to £86,790, for individual soldiers.

Generally the prices now ruling are such that it is found next to impossible to secure land at a price, even without the addition of the necessary charges, that will leave any great margin for working, consequently only the most experienced and energetic soldiers can look for the success they deserve.

During the year the Teviot property, near Roxburgh, Otago, was purchased, together with stock. This is being carried on pending settlement. The same applies to Homebrook, near Southbridge, Canterbury. The latter was held back in the hope that the Canterbury Patriotic Society would take it over for a term as a training-farm. The society, however, after mature consideration, decided not to undertake the responsibility.

Land Settlement Finance Act.

The completion of the Otaikarangi Land-settlement Finance Association, near Whangarei, Auckland, is the only transaction during the year. The increase in value has placed the associations generally in a sound position, and many members are selling out at large goodwill.

Appended will be found the usual tables.

JOHN D. RITCHIE, Chairman.