

of the soldier selectors suffered losses, but were no worse off than their neighbours. Through the shortage of early feed, milk-yields were very low for the first few months, but recovered later. Feed was plentiful enough subsequent to November, but the cows then seemed to run too much to beef. The influenza epidemic also helped to make matters worse and greatly delayed general farm-work, many settlers finding it hard to carry on at all for a few weeks. Mortality was also heavy amongst hoggets and old ewes. The experience of the last season has had the effect of inducing farmers to provide more winter feed in the shape of hay and root crops, which generally promise well, so that some good may in the end come out of the misfortune. Shearing and hay-making were very much later than usual. Owing to this a lot of the wool will be seedy owing to the rapid growth of piripiri. Through the shortage of labour some of the noxious weeds have increased, and it is disquieting to see blackberry getting a hold in country too steep for tillage. The fern problem in the hill country is still troublesome, and many pastoral farms have gone back through the lack of labour and high price of fencing-wire, preventing the erection of subdivision fences. To redeem a lot of this country various grass mixtures will have to be tried: it is thought that much more use will have to be made of *Danthonia pilosa* in the steeper and poorer parts of the grazing-farms.

High prices still continue to obtain for dairy-products, but to soldiers intending to take up farming are entirely discounted by the prices for dairy land, which are ruling higher than ever and still increasing. In the best parts of the district as much as £110 per acre has been paid for dairying-land with few buildings. The loss of dairy cows also served to stiffen prices for them on account of the demand to replace the losses, and cows were selling at anything from £17 to £28 in the southern part of the district. In the northern end they were cheaper. Owing probably to the congested state of the different freezing-works through the shortage of shipping, fat-stock prices are lower than last year. This is also the case with cattle of all kinds, excepting dairy cows, which command good prices. The potato crops, owing to lessened amount of blight, were better than usual. The development of Crown holdings last year was almost at a standstill, but it is hoped the lesser price for fencing-wire and hardware, and the return of the country's manhood from the war, will start development afresh.

In the northern end of the district the rabbit pest has increased. The high prices for labour and material and the hard winter has made it hard for soldiers and other settlers to get a start.

The ruling prices for stock last year were as follows: Southern end of the district—dairy cows, £16 to £28; northern end—dairy cows, £10 to £14; fat bullocks, £10 to £14; fat cows, £7 10s. to £9 10s.; two-year-old steers, £6 to £8; dairy heifers, £6 to £8 10s.; calves, £1 to £2 10s.; fat wethers, £1 8s. to £1 13s.; fat ewes, £1 5s. to £1 9s.; fat lambs, 16s. 6d. to £1; cull ewes, 8s. to 16s.; store wethers and ewes, £1 to £1 5s.

*Revenue.*—The revenue for the year was £72,322 7s. 8d., the amount being a little less than was received during the previous year, mainly in consequence of a falling-off in the acquisition of freeholds.

## WELLINGTON.

(G. H. M. McCURE, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

The prices of produce and stock have been well maintained, supplies having been purchased by the Imperial Government, but towards the close of the year the cold storage became congested owing to the shortage of shipping, and there was a sharp decline in the prices of all store stock. The severe and long winter caused considerable mortality among stock, and the spring proved very wet until early in December, then favourable until early in March, when a dry spell was experienced. This was favourable to securing the harvest in good condition, but was detrimental to the rape and turnip crops, and also to the pasture.

On the whole the dairy season was a good one, and the settlers have made progress. Milch cows realized from £12 to £16 per head; stores and young cattle eased considerably on former prices, as also did all classes of sheep.

Road-formation to give access to Crown tenants' holdings has proceeded steadily, and there are few now who have not dray-roads to or within a short distance of their holdings.

The wet winter caused several slips, which were an inconvenience for some months owing to difficulty in obtaining labour.

Special roading districts which have been constituted almost wholly within the Kaitieke County, being the newest settled in this district, have on the whole proved of material benefit to the settlers.

Practically the whole of the transactions this year have been in land set apart for selection by discharged soldiers, the area dealt with being 22,152 acres. The area remaining open for selection at the close of the year was 604 acres for ordinary application and 13,227 acres for discharged soldiers.

Education reserve endowments are in a satisfactory condition. Sixty-five leases expired and were nearly all renewed, the rentals being increased from £753 to £4,107 per annum.

In the North Waimarino Improved-farm Settlement one settler obtained his license under the Land Act, 1908, and there now remain nine who still hold under agreement.

The Land Board held thirteen meetings, and its sittings extended over twenty-six days. Amongst other business it dealt with 223 transfers and subleases, and 556 applications from discharged soldiers for financial assistance to purchase farms and dwellings; but these figures will be considerably added to during the coming year owing to the ever-increasing volume of the soldiers' work.

The year's work has been a very arduous one, brought about by the settlement of discharged soldiers on the land. Up to the end of the year the number of applications and inquiries was 2,150, the increase during the last twelve months being nearly double the number dealt with since