

## MARLBOROUGH.

(J. Cook, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

*New Selections.*

Five new estates were subdivided during the year and opened for selection by discharged soldiers, the number of soldiers settled being twenty-two. Two discharged soldiers were settled on small sections in the Flaxbourne Settlement, while a further area in the Opouri Valley was disposed of to an adjoining discharged-soldier tenant. These new settlements are Moorlands, Alberton, Neville, Linkwaterdale, and Goat Hills.

Moorlands: This settlement is divided into six holdings, all used exclusively for cropping. The tenants are of a particularly good type, and will, no doubt, "make good."

Alberton is divided into four allotments, and is chiefly used for cropping. The tenants are all "making good."

Neville: This settlement was allotted to three brothers, and adjoins Alberton, and is yet another agricultural proposition. These three settlers should do well.

Linkwaterdale: This settlement is divided into seven allotments, six being dairy farms, and a small area of 5 acres is let as a residential site to a discharged soldier holding adjacent land. These settlers are all doing as well as can be expected.

Goat Hills settlement is divided into four allotments. As it is pastoral country, selected in November last, the tenants have had the advantage of being able to stock up at small cost, and should do well when prices are again stable.

*Established Settlements.*

Erina: This settlement has been particularly hard hit by the present slump in the prices of wool and stock.

Warnock Settlement contains one settler, who is utilizing the property for dairying; his prospects appear good.

Wither: Sections in this settlement, with one exception, are small holdings for workmen employed as casual labourers in and around the district. The exception is an area of 450 acres, occupied by a good type of discharged soldier, who is cropping the lower portion of the section and is grazing sheep on the balance. This settler will do well.

*General.*

Speaking generally, a large percentage of the soldier settlers financed to purchase farms are shaping well, and will "make good." Two only have abandoned their holdings, leaving no trace of their whereabouts; however, there are several others who are "shaky," requiring careful handling, particularly now that prices for most products are so low. These particular cases are chiefly the inexperienced, who have been assisted to purchase farms, and with a little coaching will "win out" eventually. Frequent visits and encouragement at times like the present are a big help, and if a better means of getting about from place to place were provided less failures would result. With very few exceptions the soldiers who have been assisted to purchase or erect dwellings are fulfilling their obligations satisfactorily.

## NELSON.

(H. D. McKELLAR, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

Speaking generally, the discharged soldiers who have been settled in this district appear, with a few exceptions, to be making an honest attempt to achieve success. As times improve and markets for various classes of produce become normal the bulk of the settlers should become permanently and successfully established.

In this district the chief sources from which the soldiers derive their incomes are market-gardening, dairying, fruitgrowing, and sheep-farming. Those settlers who follow market-gardening are situated for the most part in and around Nelson, and the majority of them are doing well raising tomatoes and vegetables for the early markets. This class of work is very profitable, and the soldiers who have taken it up are for the most part doing well. The soldier settlers who are following dairying for their living have had a good year, and have received the benefits of the high prices which have been paid for butterfat by the various dairy factories. With a year or two such as has just been experienced these men should become firmly established. Those soldiers who have gone on to orchards have not had such a good year. The fruit industry cannot be said, at the present time, to be wholly successful. Shipments of fruit, however, which were sent Home this season realized good prices, and if a market can be established in the Old Country and present prices maintained the soldier settlers on orchards may look forward to much better times. Settlers engaged in sheep-farming are experiencing a very trying time, and in most cases will require relief. Their wool is still in the sheds and their surplus stock unsold. As this is their only source of income, they would be courting disaster by selling at the present low prices. The Land Board has dealt with a number of applications from sheep-farmers for postponement of their payments, and where it has been found that the settlers are doing their best to make a success the Board has invariably recommended that relief be granted, being of the opinion that with a little assistance in this direction they will be enabled to carry on notwithstanding the difficulties now being encountered.

Generally the settlers are working hard and are keen to get on, and with temporary relief in cases of genuine hardship they should become permanent and successful settlers, able to discharge all their obligations.