

holdings A further area of about 15,400 acres in the same locality is held under milling licenses extending over various periods.

*Conclusion.*—The past year's work in all its branches, and more especially as affecting the settlement of discharged soldiers, has been unusually onerous and severe; and I am pleased to be able to place on record my appreciation of the work of the whole of the officers concerned.

## MARLBOROUGH.

(J. Cook, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

*General.*—The past season has been good for both stock and crops, with the exception of the latter part of the summer and autumn, which has been too dry, and in consequence there will be rather a shortage of feed for stock this winter. The fall in prices of wool, meat, grain, &c., has had a serious effect on agricultural and pastoral industries, which is particularly marked in this district, owing to the unsatisfactory means of communication existing between this province and the central markets. Then, again, the only freezing-works in this district were damaged by fire, and had to shut down, thus still further aggravating the position. Marlborough was almost free from floods of a serious nature during the year. Groynes are being erected in the Clarence River for the protection of the bridge approaches, and incidentally the accommodation-house and reserve alongside. However, the construction of further works is required in different parts of the district for the protection of bridge approaches and areas of rich river-flats.

*Cropping.*—Very little wheat was grown during the past season, the bulk of the crops consisting of oats, barley, and peas. The pea crop was well up to the average, and oats and barley yielded fair returns. The value of lucerne is now fully realized, and I am glad to say the area under this crop is extending every year and doing exceedingly well.

*Dairying Industry.*—This industry continues to grow apace, the herds coming into profit in much better condition than in the previous year, by reason of the good season. The expansion is particularly noticeable in the Kaikoura County, where there are two factories producing cheese.

*Fruitgrowing.*—This industry is increasing in the district, although the area under cultivation does not compare with that in the neighbouring district, Nelson. The quality of the apple crops now being marketed is first class, and is probably fully equal to anything produced in the Dominion. The want of greater facilities for placing the produce on other markets has again been detrimental to the fruitgrowers. There is a fruit-preserving factory operating in Blenheim.

*Timber.*—A further revival has been experienced owing to the increased demand for building-material. There are thirteen mills operating in the district, three on Crown lands and ten on private lands. Small patches of native bush that a few years ago were considered practically valueless are now being milled, and there is evidence that the time is fast approaching when no native timber will be available. There are two plants cutting *Pinus insignis* plantations. This timber is meeting with ready sale, despite some diversity of opinion as to its qualities.

*Flax.*—There has been no activity in this industry during the year, operations being suspended to allow the flax to grow.

*Mining.*—Very little has been done during the year, but work is still continued at the scheelite-mine in the Wakamarina Valley. There are also several gold ventures in the Wairau and Wakamarina Valleys, while a good coal find is reported from the Awatere Valley.

*Lime-works.*—There are now three of these established in the district, one at Ward, one at Kaikoura, and one recently opened at Willawa Point, south of Wharanui. The latter is burning the stone for quicklime, while the other two, which are now at a standstill, were turning it out crushed in the raw state.

*Small Grazing-runs.*—Eight small grazing-runs in the Kaikoura district, five in the Awatere district, and twelve in the Wairau district were reassessed and relet to the original lessees, the rent in one case being finally fixed by arbitration. Of the twenty-five runs relet, seven were under the Land for Settlements Acts.

*Education Endowments.*—The position in regard to these is the same as formerly—viz., that lands of value from a farming point of view are all occupied, while the majority of the small town sections, chiefly in Picton and Kaikoura, are permanently leased, the remainder being let on yearly tenancies. There were no expiries of leases during the year.

*Land Board.*—The Land Board held twelve ordinary meetings during the year, and one special meeting at Kaikoura in conjunction with the Goat Hills Settlement ballot for discharged soldiers. Mr. J. S. Storey was reappointed as a member of the Board, and Mr. James Fulton was re-elected to a similar position by the Crown-land selectors.

*Land for Future Selection.*—There is practically no land available for future disposal, except an area in the Upper Opouri which is now in the hands of the sawmillers.

## NELSON.

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

*Conditions and Progress of Settlement.*—Settlement has not advanced during the year as much as could be desired, with the exception, perhaps, of the west coast portion of the district, where a good season has been experienced and a record output of butterfat produced. The two butter-factories in that locality increased their output by over 30 per cent. Dairy-farmers in the other parts of the district have also done well. Dairying is on the increase, owing no doubt to the depressed