

obtained where bush had been felled, with a consequently better take of grass and turnips than usual. Feed has been plentiful throughout the district, and farmers, especially those engaged in dairying, have had a very successful season. Most of the more accessible farming land is now being cultivated, and the value of liming demonstrated by increased crops and abundance of grass.

Towards the latter part of 1920 the price of wool fell very considerably, and this fall has continued until at the present time this product is practically unsaleable, and most farmers are holding their clips in the hope of a rise. Sheep-farming in this district is, however, usually more or less of a side-line, and settlers in Westland will probably be less affected than those in most other localities.

Prices for stock during the year were at their highest, fat bullocks ranging as high as £28 to £30, cows and heifers £18 to £20, sheep £3. Latterly, however, prices have fallen rapidly, and the latest quotations show a very great falling-off; they average approximately—fat bullocks, £12 to £13; cows and heifers, £8 to £9; sheep, £1 15s.; store cattle, £5 to £9; sheep, 7s. 6d. to 10s. (mixed lots).

Dairy-produce has remained firm, butter-fat averaging about 2s. 4d. per pound. There are five butter-factories in the district, situated at Greymouth (two), Arahura, Kokatahi, and Kumara; and three cheese-factories, at Harihari, Waitaha, and Wataroa respectively: these have all been working to their fullest capacity throughout the season.

In the more southern part of the district farming is confined to cattle and sheep raising and fattening, some really splendid stock being turned off every year.

During the year a new crushing plant has been installed at the Ross limeworks, and good lime is being produced, but the output is not yet sufficient to cope with the increasing demand.

Very little flax-milling has been done during the past twelve months; practically only one mill has been working, and that only intermittently, and this industry appears likely to remain dormant until prices improve.

There has been considerable increased activity in the timber industry; prices have been very high, and the output (49,000,000 superficial feet) is a record one for a good many years past.

The American Gold-mining Syndicate, referred to in my last year's report, has recently launched a very large dredge at Rimu Flat, near Hokitika. It is anticipated that dredging operations on a big scale will shortly be commenced, and the development of this venture will be awaited with hopeful interest.

In the past two years large areas throughout the district have been proclaimed as provisional State forest, the total area to date amounting to some 1,600,000 acres. The majority of the large pastoral runs are now included in these State forest areas, and the question of preserving to the present runholders the contingent rights of renewal and improvement given to them under Part VI of the Land Act, 1908, is one which requires very careful consideration.

On the whole the district has shown steady progress during the past year, and, although the present outlook in regard to prices for wool and stock is perhaps not very bright, there is every reason to look forward with confidence to a fair measure of prosperity for the settlers in the coming year. A large proportion of the settled land in Westland is held under lease or license from the Crown, there being comparatively little freehold. As far as can be judged, the Crown tenants are quite holding their own with the remainder of the farming community.

Land opened for Selection.—Five sections, totalling 1,906 acres, and one pastoral run, of 14,000 acres, were offered by ballot during the year to discharged soldiers exclusively. With the exception of one section of 505 acres all were taken up. Exclusive of miscellaneous leases and the above-mentioned run, an area of 7,000 acres was taken up by thirty-six settlers.

Freeholds.—The total area of freehold in this district is at present about 155,000 acres; nineteen leaseholds, totalling 8,371 acres, having been purchased during the past year.

Land Board Work.—The Land Board held twelve meetings during the year, one day in each month. At each meeting the forenoon was devoted to discharged soldiers' applications, &c., and the afternoon to ordinary business. In addition to numerous miscellaneous matters brought before the Board, 154 applications for land, 215 transfers, and 98 applications for advances to discharged soldiers were dealt with.

Revenue and Arrears.—The gross revenue for the year from all sources was £36,440; the actual rent-roll was £9,692, arrears of rent, &c., at 31st March being £559. Of this amount some £150 has since been paid in; £160 is in the hands of the Crown Solicitor for collection, and every effort is being made to reduce these arrears.

Land remaining for Future Selection.—The Crown lands in Westland available for future selection consist chiefly of bush country, more or less heavily timbered, and of worked-out milling-bush, generally of rather poor quality and difficult to bring into profitable cultivation. About 4,000 acres of milled-out bush of fair quality are now under survey, and it is estimated that some 7,000 acres will be available for selection during the coming year.

CANTERBURY.

(G. H. BULLARD, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

Conditions and Progress of Settlement.—The settlement of discharged soldiers has again constituted the bulk of the work of land administration in this district during the past year. The season has not been a favourable one. During the months of spring there was a considerable rainfall, which interfered with the sowing of crops. Then again during the summer the season has been particularly dry, and feed is now scarce. Wheat crops have been good, but oats poor; turnips and rape have suffered from the long drought, and now blight is prevalent. The prospects for winter feed are not