

Practically all the land opened for selection during the year was for discharged soldiers only, the principal block being Strathvale Settlement, which was subdivided into nine farms of first-class dairying-land. It was rather late in the season when this block was put on the market, so the settlers did not have an opportunity of getting buildings erected and herds together in time for the milking season. However, the selectors are all now in residence, and should eventually do well. Crichton Park Settlement was purchased under section 3 of the Discharged Soldiers Settlement Amendment Act, 1917, at the request of six soldier applicants. The country is suitable principally for grazing, and the selectors are confident of their ability to make a success of the venture without further financial assistance from the Government. Two of the settlers purchased outright, one selected on the deferred-payment system, and three decided to accept leases under special tenure.

The Waikiwi Town Settlement, which consists of suburban areas adjacent to Invercargill, was subdivided into quarter-acre lots, and forty sections were submitted at public auction, and with the exception of two or three all were disposed of. These allotments consist of excellent building-sites in a good locality; and when the demand warrants it further lots will be offered.

The number of tenants who converted their holdings to freehold during the period under review was above the average of recent years, and it is a long time since the revenue from this source has been exceeded.

The Land Board work has been heavy during the last year, with a slight falling-off in the business transacted and the number of items on the agenda papers during the last three or four months. Only monthly meetings have been held, as since the curtailment of the advances to discharged soldiers it was not necessary to have fortnightly meetings.

I am pleased to be able to report that the number of tenants in arrears with their payments at the close of the year is somewhat less than the average for the last five or six years, although the amount outstanding is slightly larger. Every effort has been made to collect amounts outstanding, and I think the result as disclosed must be considered highly satisfactory.

The land remaining for future disposal in this district consists mostly of bush areas. A large area in the Lillburn district has been surveyed, but it is not advisable to dispose of same until access has been provided, and probably until the sawmilling timber has been disposed of. An area of run country, consisting of about 12,000 acres, will be opened as a pastoral run during the year, it being a subdivision of an education endowment holding. Some subdivisions of run country the licenses of which will expire in 1921 will be surveyed during the year in preparation for opening for selection.