

In the Hawtrey Settlement the remaining sections are gradually being disposed of under the deferred-payment system, and only seven allotments are now unselected. The other estates acquired in former years continue to make good progress, though of course the settlers are, in common with all other farmers, affected by the present financial stringency and the low prices for stock and produce.

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#### MARLBOROUGH.

(J. COOK, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

Six estates were acquired for the purpose of the Discharged Soldiers Settlement Act, and were disposed of in twenty-three allotments. They comprise dairying, agricultural, and pastoral country, and the settlers are all well satisfied with their holdings. There are now twenty-one settlements in this district, comprising 235,177 acres, occupied by 489 lessees. With few exceptions the settlers on established settlements are doing well, as transfers of holdings are not effected without the passing of a substantial goodwill. The settlers generally had a good year for wool, crops, &c., but suffered considerably in the latter part of the year owing to the slump in prices.

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#### WESTLAND.

(R. S. GALBRAITH, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

The only two settlements in this district—viz., Kokatahi and Poerua—are well established, having been in existence for a number of years; both are highly improved, and are thriving. The settlers are principally engaged in dairying, and are all doing well. No estates were acquired during the year.

Three meetings of the Local Land Purchase Board were held. Offers of four properties were considered, three being declined and one recommended.

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#### CANTERBURY.

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

The total number of estates settled in this district is now 137, comprising an area of 604,000 acres, and bringing in an annual rental of £177,751. The majority of the settlements are now well established, and, apart from the present financial stringency, the majority of the settlers are doing well—although this does not apply at present to those whose holdings consist wholly of pastoral country. Settlers on this class of country, especially those who have gone on to land during the boom period will experience difficulty in meeting engagements, but on the whole they seem determined to do their best to surmount their troubles.

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#### OTAGO.

(ROBERT T. SADD, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

All the lands purchased for settlement during the past year have been set aside for discharged soldiers, and are dealt with under that heading.

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#### SOUTHLAND.

(THOMAS BROOK, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

Three new settlements were opened during the year. Two of these were for discharged soldiers only, and they are dealt with under that heading. Waikiwi Settlement, comprising 50 acres, in a suburb of Invercargill, were subdivided into building allotments, of which nineteen were opened for selection by soldiers and forty were offered at auction to the general public. The latter met with a ready sale, but few soldiers have availed themselves of this opportunity of acquiring building-sites.

The older settlements continue to prosper, and the lessees, with few exceptions, should have no difficulty in adjusting their affairs to meet the conditions brought about by the fall in the values of primary products.