

number of such holdings occupied by soldiers was 935, with a total area of 251,531 acres. The larger portion of the new selections during the year consisted of settlement lands, two new settlements, one at Hikunai on the east coast of the Hauraki Peninsula and one on the Rangitaiki Plains in the Bay of Plenty, having been made available, while additional areas in the Orongo Settlement on the Hauraki Plains, and in the Reporoa Settlement near Rotorua, were offered as the preliminary works advanced sufficiently to enable the lands to be occupied.

Revenue and Advances.

The total receipts during the year for credit of the Discharged Soldiers Settlement Account were £127,701, the principal items consisting of repayments and interest on farm properties purchased, £39,777; on house properties, £25,951; and on current-account advances for stocking and improving farms, £36,280.

The advances paid out during the year amounted to £509,734, the principal items being—for purchase of farm properties, £95,234; for erection of houses, £170,035; and on current account, £239,966.

The total advances outstanding at the close of the year were—On farm properties, £1,271,019; on house properties, £463,442; and on current account, £649,155.

Although the volume of advances shows a considerable decrease for the year, owing to the suspension of purchases of farm properties, the continuation of advances on current account has represented a substantial volume of work, which is indicated by the fact that the number of vouchers put through for the year was 7,246, as against 7,086 for the previous period, payments under current account, although involving much smaller aggregate amounts, representing a very much larger amount of work in examination and verification of invoices, &c., than in the case of payments for purchase of properties.

A feature of the work during the latter part of the year has been a large number of applications for postponements of payments on instalment mortgages of farm holdings, the restricted returns for all classes of farm-produce having rendered it impossible for settlers to meet their half-yearly instalments. All the cases submitted received careful investigation and consideration before any recommendation was made.

General Condition of Established Settlements.

The following remarks deal briefly with the condition of the principal settlements, both on purchased and Crown lands, within the district:—

Reynolds Settlement, near Cambridge: Eleven holdings occupied by discharged soldiers and seven by civilians. Holdings average 65 acres each. Established June, 1916. Lessees dairying; well established and successful.

Taniwha Settlement, near Te Kauwhata: Eight holdings occupied by soldiers and two by civilians. Holdings average 55 acres each. Established December, 1916. Lessees dairying; holdings well improved; prospects good.

Tapapa Settlement, near Hinuera: Ten holdings, all occupied by soldiers; average, 104 acres each. Established June, 1917. Lessees doing good work renewing pastures and improving their holdings; dairying; prospects good.

Pakarau Settlement, near Morrinsville: Twenty-three holdings, all soldiers; average, 118 acres each. Established December, 1916. Good work done; holdings generally well improved, pastures renewed, and dairying-capacity increased. Substantial goodwill value in sections.

Mangateparu Settlement, near Morrinsville: Fifty-five holdings, all soldiers; average, 77 acres each. Established March and September, 1919. Majority of settlers doing excellent work, carrying on dairying. Have suffered from dry seasons, but settlement in good heart, and ultimate success assured.

Hukutaia Settlement, near Opotiki: Twenty holdings, all soldiers. Established July, 1919. Holdings average 94 acres each, and are used for dairying and mixed farming, and one apiary-site. Holdings of good quality: mostly well improved, and holders thoroughly established, with good prospects of success.

Te Miro Settlement, near Cambridge: Established February, 1918; thirty-one holders, all soldiers. Average size of holdings, 196 acres; dairying and mixed farming. Progress of settlement retarded by difficulties of access, rabbits, unsuitability of some of selectors for successfully handling their holdings, and withholding of dairy-bonus payments. Those of the original selectors who have retained their holdings have developed them well, and, with more favourable financial conditions, should succeed. Unsuitable selectors are being gradually replaced by others better qualified. The settlement has good prospects of ultimate success, but its difficulties have been unusually acute, and the effects will be felt for some time.

Matuku Settlement, on the Rangitaiki Plain: Established 1919 and 1920. Eleven holdings; average, 92 acres. With exception of two or three rather wet sections, holders are dairying and doing well; others will require time, but prospects good, and success of whole settlement well assured.

Waiare and Hereford Park Settlements, near Te Puke and Pongakawa, Bay of Plenty: Four holdings each; former average 109 acres, latter 354 acres. Former dairying; only difficulty water-supply, now under consideration; prospects good. Latter grazing; prospects at present not very satisfactory.

Horahora Settlement, near Cambridge: Established June, 1919. Ten holdings; average, 170 acres; dairying and mixed farming. Good holdings, being developed and worked satisfactorily. Success assured.

Horahia Settlement, on Hauraki Plains: Established September, 1919, purchased for six applicants who selected. Holdings average 65 acres; dairying; improvements satisfactory, sections well worked, and prospects good.