

Statute Law Amendment Act, 1918. As the law now stands, persons of enemy origin who have been naturalized in New Zealand do not require a license before entering into any contract for the acquisition of land. It is only persons who are still subjects of former enemy States—i.e., Germany, Austria-Hungary, Turkey, or Bulgaria—who require such licenses.

In the Accountant's Branch the work has materially increased in volume and importance for some years past, principally owing to the ramifications of the Discharged Soldiers Settlement Act, and to the work arising out of the various drainage operations, and the investigation of the economic values of Crown properties based on estimated production and cost.

Applications and recommendations in support of relief for Crown settlers owing to alleged financial hardship are carefully scrutinized, and it is only when it is clearly evident from the financial statement of the position of a property and the prospective productive capacity for the immediate ensuing season that a measure of relief is essential that such is finally recommended for approval.

Administrative matters connected with the Discharged Soldiers Settlement Act and amendments, the realization of securities for loans under this Act, the resale of abandoned properties financed under the Discharged Soldiers Settlement Act, and the many legal technicalities constantly arising in connection therewith are dealt with in this branch. Losses on the realization of properties and stock are also investigated, and the Department's legal remedy against defaulting mortgagors is determined from the reports submitted.

The accounts of the Lands Department have ever been of a complicated nature, owing to the many enactments of the Legislature dealing with the disposition of land revenue and the administration of Crown lands. In accordance with the decision that balance-sheets be prepared for all phases of the activities of the Government, the accounts of the Department have undergone a complete reorganization. The inauguration of a complete system of departmental accounts involving the preparation of commercial balance-sheets has thrown a considerable amount of work on this branch of the office. The Department controls capital assets valued in all at over £50,000,000. It need hardly be stated that the control of accounts and other matters arising out of the financial administration of these assets is a work of considerable magnitude. The table herein (see *ante*) shows the capital controlled by the Department, the revenue earned, and the revenue charges.

The statement of expenditure previously given, and the reference to the receipts for the financial year under review, will show the actual cash handled during the year, but this does not form any reliable index to the volume of work dealt with. All recommendations for the expenditure of public moneys are carefully scrutinized, and a considerable volume of correspondence, much of which involves considerable legal knowledge, passes through this branch during the year.

REPORTS ON COGNATE SUBJECTS.

As in former years, separate reports are required to be laid before Parliament in connection with many of the operations carried out by the Department. They comprise—

Surveys.—The report by the Surveyor-General on the work of the survey (or technical) branch of the Department is submitted in parliamentary paper C.-1A.

Swamp-drainage.—The report required by the Swamp Drainage Act, 1915, is contained in parliamentary paper C.-4.

Discharged Soldiers Settlement.—The annual report under the Discharged Soldiers Settlement Act, 1915, is furnished by the Department in parliamentary paper C.-9.

Scenery-preservation.—The statutory report containing details of reservations and statement of accounts appears in parliamentary paper C.-6.

Advances for Roading of Crown Lands.—The necessary report submitted in accordance with section 63 of the Land Laws Amendment Act, 1913, appears in parliamentary paper C.-7.

Draining Operations in Hauraki Plains.—A report by the Chief Drainage Engineer on this subject appears in parliamentary paper C.-8.

Public Domains.—A brief summary of the year's operations is given in parliamentary paper C.-10.

Rangitaiki Land Drainage.—The annual report on the operations in the Rangitaiki Plains is given in parliamentary paper C.-11.

Kauri-gum Industry.—The annual report of the Kauri-gum Superintendent on the year's operations is given in parliamentary paper C.-12.

National Endowments.—The annual report required by section 11 of the Land Laws Amendment Act, 1920, appears in parliamentary paper C.-14.