

money will be found for all their needs is to destroy self-reliance and all sense of personal responsibility to repay. It is surprising to note the seeming indifference with which some men regard their financial obligations. A further portion of Teviot Station was also settled by discharged soldiers during the year. Special efforts were made to ensure that the new soldier settlers on Teviot and Mount Pisa should get sheep from the station flocks—sheep bred on and used to the country. This was a very real benefit to the men about to start.

As mentioned in my general report on land-settlement, the season has been a most unfavourable one, and soldier settlers have had their full measure of disappointment. No one can control the weather conditions; but the Department can, and no doubt will, sift the cases to ascertain where failure is due to incompetence or like cause and where it is due to circumstances that do not lie within the powers of the returned soldier to control. Some settlers who have failed ought to be helped further. These will profit by their experience and will ultimately succeed. Others should not be given any further assistance or encouragement, for they will never succeed, and will probably never have the will to succeed.

After the work of revaluation has been completed it should be possible to classify the soldier settlers into groups under, say, three headings—viz., assured successes, probable or potential successes, and failures. When this is done the Department will be able to take a comprehensive view of the general position—to take stock, as it were. The result, I venture to say, will be highly creditable.

SOUTHLAND.

(K. M. GRAHAM, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

Now that both Revaluation Committees are within measurable distance of completing their inspections and the reports continue to come in steadily, the present offers a good opportunity for reviewing the whole position and comparing the individual soldiers' financial position with their future prospects. So far nothing of an outstanding nature has been revealed in the way of soldiers purchasing at excessive prices; and while in some cases reductions are recommended to bring the prices down to what is considered fair present-day values, it can be stated that many of these recommendations are only in keeping with a gradual easing in land-values which has been going on for the last three years. Other reductions are directly due to the bad present condition of a few farms, which would not be the case had the soldiers not experienced bad years and were in consequence short of the necessary capital to keep their places in a productive state. It is satisfactory to note that the majority of the men interviewed had complaints regarding only temporary matters; arrears, in particular, which they consider an uphill proposition to be faced some day. Quite a number, although signing applications for revaluation, had no particular complaint to make, and expressed themselves well satisfied with their prospects. Regarding the few farms which have fallen back on the Department's hands, while it is admitted that they included some of the poorer sorts, it cannot be claimed that the price paid for them had anything to do with the failure of the men to make good. The policy of the Department in granting postponements was taken full advantage of whenever required by these soldiers, and it was due either to unfortunate stock transactions or other losses sustained in the ordinary course of farming that compelled them to give up.

As the majority of the soldier settlers here are engaged in dairying, the exceptionally dry season just passed has reduced their takings considerably, but on the whole there is sufficient winter feed provided, and stock generally are looking well.

One disadvantage that the man on a small holding has to contend with is that he has to keep a team of horses and an expensive set of implements to grow winter feed and renew pastures. The community system of owning implements, &c., has been tried on some of the settlements, but only in a few cases has this been found to work well.

Although our records disclose that some of the soldier settlers have still a lot of leeway to make up, and that further help and careful treatment will be necessary, it can be said that good progress is being made generally; and when it is remembered that these men had to purchase stock, and build up their farms at high prices for everything they required, their positions and prospects are seen to compare favourably with those of the older-established settlers of the district.

REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE DOMINION REVALUATION BOARD.

THE DISCHARGED SOLDIERS SETTLEMENT AMENDMENT ACT, 1923.

REVALUATION OF SOLDIER FARMS.

Immediately upon the passing of the Discharged Soldiers Settlement Amendment Act, 1923, regulations were gazetted prescribing the necessary forms, and the Dominion Revaluation Board was appointed. The personnel of the Dominion Board is as follows: J. B. Thompson, Under-Secretary of the Lands and Survey Department (Chairman); F. W. Flanagan, Valuer-General; R. A. Rodger, of Tapanui; John Gordon, of Hamilton; and, in terms of section 25 of the Finance Act, 1923, Mr. J. H. Richardson, of Khandallah, is a member of the Board.

On the recommendation of the Dominion Revaluation Board, pursuant to section 3 of the Discharged Soldiers Settlement Amendment Act, 1923, twenty-four District Revaluation Committees were appointed throughout the Dominion, and the personnel of the said committees is as follows:—

District Revaluation Committees.

North Auckland District.—North: E. Harding, runholder, Dargaville (Chairman); F. Holder, farmer, Kaitia; J. N. McCarroll, farmer, Maunu, Whangarei. South: E. Morgan, valuer, Moana Avenue, Onehunga (Chairman); John Knight, farmer, Albany; T. O. Jenkins, Ahuroa.