

Concessions by way of postponements have been made, the arrears being deferred for long periods. In necessitous cases and cases of hardship remissions of rent or interest have been authorized.

As the outcome of the Board's negotiations, private mortgages and debts amounting to £126,380 have been reduced by £91,461, while private mortgages, totalling £37,381, have been acquired by the Crown at a discount of £15,228, the settlers obtaining the benefit of such discount.

The Board is now engaged on the investigation of Current Account advances, as authorized by the legislation of last session. Each settler's account will be reviewed and placed in a solvent position. When this work is finalized the soldier settlers throughout the Dominion should be in a position to successfully occupy their farms and meet their liabilities to the Crown. The number of Current Accounts to be reviewed by the Dominion Board is approximately ten thousand.

LAND-DRAINAGE.

Continued good progress has been made in the development of the various **Land-drainage.** reclamation projects now under construction.

On the Hauraki Plains the works are now largely confined to the reclamation of peat lands, and considerable work has been carried out in the drainage of these areas. Portions of the remaining areas will make good settlement land, but much of the land will be developed for flax-culture, there being an increasing demand for suitable holdings for this purpose.

On the Rangitaiki Plains, comprising 90,000 acres, the approved development programme is nearing completion.

Works on the Waihi Swamp, 11,000 acres, are well forward, and it is anticipated that the remaining lands will be available for settlement during the coming year. Those portions of the area that are particularly low-lying will be devoted to flax-cultivation.

Satisfactory progress is likewise being maintained on the projects under construction at Hikurangi and Kaitaia.

The output of exportable products from these areas, formerly waste swamp, is increasing, but it will be many years before the maximum point is reached.

Extensive surveys and a thorough investigation of the waste lands in and around Hamilton have been completed. In this locality there is an area of 50,000 acres of semi-waste country offering fair prospects for future development and closer settlement.

ACQUISITION OF NATIVE LANDS.

Interests in Native land representing an area of 29,527 acres have been **Native lands.** acquired by the Crown at a cost of £58,779, increasing the area purchased since 1910 to 1,357,810 acres, at a cost of £3,277,355.

KAURI-GUM INDUSTRY.

In its year's operations the Department sold gum to the value of £15,300 and made purchases amounting to £11,100. The purchases were made with a view to relieving the acute distress which prevailed amongst the diggers owing to private buyers not operating. Most of the purchases were made in the far North, but gum has been bought during the year from all the principal gum-digging centres. **Kauri-gum industry.**

Towards the end of the year many diggers left the gumfields temporarily, and production during the winter will probably be well below the usual figure. The opinion is expressed that during the coming year Continental buyers will operate freely.