

majority of cases a commendable effort is being made by the men to reduce their liabilities. The total amounts owing are as follows: Farm properties, £19,055 7s. 6d.; house properties, £1,826 17s. 1d.; Current Account interest, £7,498 5s. 11d.

There is an increasing number of soldier house-property transfers coming up for the Land Board's consideration each year, partly brought about through changed conditions in the mortgagors' employment. There are still a number of these house-property owners in arrears, but a determined effort is being made to reduce the amounts owing and to get rid of unsatisfactory mortgagors.

WELLINGTON.

(H. W. C. MACKINTOSH, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

The remarks made in connection with the aspects of general settlement apply equally to soldier settlers. These men met with the same conditions climatically as their fellow civilian farmers, and they experienced the same instability of prices for farm-produce, &c. The soldier settler is better off, however, in that he has had the benefit of advances and remissions made by the Department, whereas his civilian colleague has been thrown on his own resources.

Dairy-farmers began the season under cold and wet conditions, which hindered growth of pastures, and consequently curtailed the milk-supply. The latter part of the season was more equable, and good cheques were received.

Sheep and cattle did not come up to expectation, the markets being very unsteady. Wool averaged about 1s. per pound, and although this was only half of the price realized in the previous season the price was a payable one where the fleece was well grown.

Those soldiers who elected to go in for poultry-farming for a livelihood have, except in isolated cases, not been successful. The high cost of laying-birds and the almost prohibitive price of fowl-feed reduce the profits to practically nil. It would appear that the poultry-farmer should grow his own feed; but then, again, if the land will grow wheat it is too valuable for poultry-farming. This class of security is not regarded with favour by the Department.

Soldier settlers will be beginning to feel the benefit of the concessions granted by the Dominion Revaluation Board, and when their Current Accounts have been investigated by that Board they should be on the high road to success.

The receipts for the year, interest and principal, amounted to £309,240, somewhat less than last year.

The amount of loans and advances outstanding at the 31st March, 1926, was—Instalment mortgages on farms, £1,007,440; instalment mortgages on dwellings, £1,441,088; Current Account advances, £534,886; miscellaneous accounts, £348,039 3s. 3d.

NELSON.

(A. F. WATERS, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

The Dominion Revaluation Board completed the investigation of the Current Account advances of most of the soldier settlers in the district during the past year, and this together with revaluation of the properties has placed most of the settlers on a sound financial basis. The exceptions are chiefly those whose farms on account of their limited carrying-capacity are unable to maintain a settler and enable him also to meet his liabilities.

There are still a few settlers who show little capacity for farming and whose properties have depreciated under their management. These farms are gradually coming back into the hands of the Department, and are being disposed of to other settlers.

A promising feature is the effort that is being made by the soldier settlers who are dairying to improve their herds and increase their output by the introduction of pedigree stock. A good deal could still be done to improve the class of sheep in the Nelson District, as too many of the settlers seem to be satisfied with a wool-clip of 5 lb. per sheep or less.

The fruitgrowers have had a phenomenal crop; but as the bulk of the fruit is being exported it remains to be seen if the Home market will be glutted and prices suffer accordingly.

The hopgrowers have been in an unsatisfactory position for several years past; but a Co-operative Hopgrowers' Association has been formed whereby the growers are entitled to put 60 per cent. of their previous years' output into a first pool. The benefit of this policy is still to be proved.

MARLBOROUGH.

(J. STEVENSON, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

Soldier Settlement.—Generally, I am pleased to report in a more hopeful strain than last year. The improved position is directly traceable to the liberal concessions in valuations and adjustments of Current Accounts made by the Dominion Revaluation Board.

Regarding those settlers engaged in dairying: Following the concessions made by the Dominion Revaluation Board, and with the object of assisting the settler to meet his payments of rent and interest to the Department on due dates so that he would get all the benefit of rebates for prompt payment, a system of taking milk orders up to 50 per cent. on the dairyman's milk-yield was adopted in this district. This has worked admirably in the interests of both the settler and the