

OTAGO.

(N. C. KENSINGTON, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

There is little to report as regards soldier settlement, and in spite of the trying conditions the soldier settler is carrying out his obligations to the best of his ability. In most cases where the finance of the farm is controlled by a stock company, the settler has not been in a position to meet his obligations to the Crown. The firm generally is supplying the necessary seeds and manures and living-expenses to enable the settler to carry on, but the position so far as the Crown is concerned as lessor or mortgagee is far from satisfactory. I can say definitely that the soldier settler is not at all satisfied with the position, and is anxious to meet his obligations to the Crown; but, in view of the fact that his proceeds from sales are in the hands of a firm, he can do nothing in the matter. Unfortunately, the position of his current account with the firm is such that even if it was desired to take over the account the security offering would not permit of this being done. Those whose accounts are controlled by the Department have carried on steadily, and in most cases the account is in about the same condition as last year, and the settler does not appear to be downhearted in spite of the small return received for produce.

Speaking generally, I think it can be said that soldier settlers recognize that economy must be practised, and are now adapting themselves to the difficult position, and are prepared to carry on.

SOUTHLAND.

(B. C. McCABE, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

The soldier settlers in the district have come through a difficult year exceedingly well. Generally speaking, they have faced the position cheerfully and have done their best to pay their way. At the same time, the maintenance of pastures has not been neglected, and progress has been made in the improvement of dairy herds. A number of the settlers have taken advantage of the subsidized unemployed labour in developing their holdings by bringing in more bush lands and by improving areas already partially developed.

Some concern is felt with regard to the purchase of fertilizers for the coming year, and some adjustments may be necessary in order to provide money for that purpose. As is to be expected, the position of those settlers whose holdings even in better times were on the small side is now desperate, and patient and liberal administration will be necessary in order to enable them to carry on.
