

their grass burnt by fire. This land has now recovered, and is growing good grass. The settlers are of the practical, thorough class, and should make the settlement a complete success.

*Richmond Brook Estate.*—The whole of this estate comprises 5,854 acres, of which 5,669 was disposed of during the year in eleven holdings to eleven selectors. The selectors appear to be thriving and prosperous, and mostly all the sections are ring-fenced. The area acquired on this estate was 5,854 acres, of which 185 acres is occupied by roads and reserves, leaving 5,669 acres under lease to eleven selectors, with an annual rental of £1,305 0s. 6d., and £8 12s. 10d. interest and sinking fund on buildings.

*Office-work.*—The following figures will give an idea of the very marked increase in the amount of clerical work done during the year: There were 2,551 applications received from 816 applicants, only 159 of whom could be placed on the land. The land taken up represented an increase on last year's transactions of 145,534 acres, and 159 new settlers were added to our books. 6,182 letters were received and despatched: this does not include the issue of sale-maps. The total number of vouchers passed through the office was 1,496, of which 964, representing a sum of £20,013, were paid out of Imprest Account. 470 copies of leases were written in, and 170 cards forwarded to the Auditor. Thirty-six transfers of lands were effected. In the Receiver's branch, besides the actual revenue collected, 1,594 rent-notices were issued, and 1,464 receipts in duplicate. During the year it was found necessary to obtain extra assistance to cope with the arrears, and a temporary clerk has been occupied during the last six months continuously at this work. There still remains a considerable amount of arrears to be overtaken.

C. W. ADAMS,  
Commissioner of Crown Lands.

## WESTLAND.

*Land open for Selection.*—The total area which is open for selection in this district is 76,669 acres.

*Cash.*—During the year no lands were disposed of for cash, most of the settlers preferring it under other tenures.

*Deferred Payment.*—Under this tenure several settlers in the Taramakau Special Settlement have made their final payments, and we fully expect that the remaining selectors will also have acquired their freehold during the coming year.

*Occupation with Right of Purchase.*—Four selections were made under this heading.

*Lease in Perpetuity.*—482 acres were taken up under this tenure.

*Pastoral Runs.*—The area held amounts to 759,085 acres, being an increase of 153,434 acres as compared with last year, with a corresponding increase of revenue. Of this, 24,597 acres are held by 207 lessees under the 219th section of the Land Act, this being the only tenure possible while the Midland Railway Company's contract subsists. The removal of this restriction will lead to the conversion of the bulk of these temporary leaseholds into leaseholds under one or other of the more permanent systems.

The Crown Lands Ranger has made his usual periodical inspections of the lands held under the various tenures. He has also inspected and reported to the Land Board on 107 applications made under the 219th section of the Act. During the year he has also paid repeated visits to the different sawmills under his charge in Westland and the southern portion of the Nelson district; besides a general oversight of the many woodcutters throughout these districts.

The following is a statement of the timber cut and royalties collected thereon within the Westland District:—

*Mining Blocks.*—Red-pine, 2,090,322 ft., £400 14s. 7d.

*Crown Lands.*—Silver-pine, 211,211 ft., £105 12s. 2d.

*Education Reserves.*—Red-pine, 1,575,000 ft., £393 15s. About 250 men are employed in the lumber trade here.

*Timber.*—The approximate quantity of timber at present in this district on Crown and Native lands, and the export of timber for the last three years, is as under: On Crown lands, unsold, 7,888,400,000 ft.; on Native lands, 48,000,000 ft. The export of timber for each of the last three years was—for 1897, 10,473,000 ft.; for 1898, 10,000,000 ft.; for 1899, 12,165,600 ft.

*Lands for Future Settlement.*—We have had about 2,300 acres of agricultural land at Karangarua recently surveyed; there will also be some 2,000 acres in Cook Valley subdivided at an early date, together with about 1,000 acres in the Lower Waiho country, all of which will be offered to the public during the coming year. These areas are all outside of the Midland Railway reservation. Within the reservation, in anticipation of early legislation, we are cutting up some 3,000 acres at Waitaha for close settlement, and fully expect, as noted above, to effect the permanent occupation of some 17,000 acres now held under the 219th section of the Act.

## *Lands under the Land for Settlements Act.*

*Poerua Estate.*—This estate is slowly progressing, each holding showing considerable improvement. A great deal of preliminary work in the shape of bushfelling, fencing, and draining has been accomplished during the past year, despite the exceedingly wet and inclement season. The number of residents has increased, and a larger area grassed, with a greater quantity of stock. The roading of the estate is being gradually overtaken, and will soon enable the outlying occupants