

The surrenders, as indicated in the same table, amount to 84, covering an area of 160,250 acres, producing a rental of £1,886 3s. 11d. By comparison with the figures of 1901–2, it may be mentioned that the number has increased by 9, and the area and amounts are also considerably greater.

Tenants are generally beneficially affected by this latter process, though it is unfortunate that the necessity for surrendering holdings arises from causes the very reverse, such as special circumstances affecting the suitability and the unprofitable working of the lands, as explained in last year's report. In such cases the Land Boards, with the sanction of the Minister of Lands, exercise their powers judiciously, and deal with each case upon its merits.

As might be expected, there were no forfeitures of tenants' interests in the Cheviot Estate, though there was one surrender for the purpose of partition.

In Land for Settlements estates there were 27 forfeitures, covering 2,593 acres, the annual rental being £619 8s. 4d. The surrenders on the estates numbered 15, with an area of 574 acres, the annual rental payable thereon being £260 13s.

The Land Boards had to exercise their right of re-entry, and take possession of 11 sections in Native townships, and of one under each of the heads "Thermal Springs" and "Endowments."

HAURAKI GOLDFIELDS.

The provisions of "The Mining Districts Land Occupation Act, 1894," having proved insufficient to meet the altered circumstances and requirements of the population within the Hauraki Mining District brought about by the lull in mining operations, it was decided to offer greater facilities to enable miners and settlers to secure extended holdings, so as to enable them to obtain sufficient returns from utilising land for farming and grazing to counterbalance the falling-off in their incomes formerly obtained when engaging in mining and its associated employments.

Early in the present year regulations were issued, illustrated by plans, empowering the Auckland Land Board to grant licenses within the goldfield to applicants for grazing-areas up to 1,000 acres, for reasonable rents, for terms of twenty-one years, renewable if approved. Provision has been made for conserving public interests, especially all necessary rights for the prosecution of mining operations (including right of entry and passage through the lands under lease, the taking of roads, the preservation of right to cut timber); whilst the licensees' interests have also been safeguarded with respect to their dwellings and the land immediately around the same.

It is anticipated that the opening of the Crown lands within the goldfield upon the above terms will enable the pastoral and mining industries to go hand in hand; prevent monopoly, without interfering with the all-important mining industry; and materially conduce to the prosperity of the population in this part of the colony, whose attention has heretofore been given almost exclusively to mining.

RESERVES.

The Legislature has made provision by various enactments to meet manifold public requirements and interests, thus—"The Land Act, 1892" (section 235) empowers the reservation of land for almost every conceivable purpose or object; "The Education Reserves Act, 1877" (section 20) necessitates the selection and reservation of 5 per cent. of certain Crown lands in the North Island for endowment of primary education, and also allows of endowments for secondary education. Numerous reserves and endowments are also set aside under special enactments.

To meet the foregoing requirements, about 30,311 acres were gazetted during the year as reserves; the areas include forest reserves, reserves for the preservation of scenery, plantation, recreation, and education. The reserves, except those which remain in the charge of the Commissioners of Crown Lands, are subsequently vested in and thus handed over to the control of the local bodies legally entitled thereto. The total area reserved, or "granted under various Acts" free, since the foundation of the colony is 9,778,483 acres (*vide* Table 20).

FORESTS.

The State and Crown forests comprise the portions of the indigenous forests which have from time to time been proclaimed and brought under the provisions of "The New Zealand State Forests Act, 1885," and are conserved and administered by the Commissioners of Crown Lands under the direction of the Hon. the Minister of Lands, and in accordance