

In the west coast district 822 inspections were made by two Rangers of an area of 85,231 acres, being a decrease of sixty-nine in number and 26,256 acres in area from last year's figures. The amount required to be spent on improvements was £41,008, whereas £135,435 was expended, being £94,427 in excess of requirements. The grand totals for both districts are as follows: Number of inspections made, 1,678, over an area of 361,034 acres, being a decrease from last year's figures of 171 in number, and an increase of 40,060 acres in area. Improvements required to be effected to the value of £149,015; improvements actually done to the value of £348,488: excess, £199,473. Out of 1,678 holdings inspected only seventy-nine holders had not complied with requirements.

#### REBATES OF RENTAL.

Rebate, amounting to £2,418, for prompt payment of rental to 2,187 selectors was granted. These figures show an increase over last year's returns of seventy-six selectors and £74 in amount.

#### ARREARS OF RENTAL.

There are 177 selectors in arrear with two or more payments, amounting to £1,711, comprising an area of 19,851 acres, being an increase over last year's figures of nineteen in number and £173 in amount, the area being less by 5,049 acres. The total arrears, inclusive of the current half-year's payment, are 377 in number, £3,548 in amount, for 58,774 acres.

#### SMALL GRAZING-RUNS.

A number of these leases are now running out, and will determine by effluxion of time next year, and the necessary valuations have been made and notices issued in terms of section 209 of "The Land Act, 1885."

#### FORFEITURES AND SURRENDERS.

There was only one forfeiture during the year under the land-for-settlements tenure, the area held being 10 acres and 35 perches, and the annual rental £14 Os. 2d.

Two surrenders, of 205 acres, were accepted, the annual rental being £15 2s.

#### RESERVES AND ENDOWMENTS.

During the year 11,887 acres were reserved for the following purposes: Scenery, water-conservation, State forests, primary education, &c. An area of 2,200 acres was set aside as an endowment for the Victoria College.

#### CASH LANDS.

The area disposed of for cash was 546 acres 3 roods 11 perches, comprising one selection of 446 acres under Part III of "The Land Act, 1892"; the land purchased without option being ten lots of rural land aggregating 93 acres 2 roods 13 perches, and sixteen lots of town lands amounting to 7 acres and 38 perches.

#### TIMBER ROYALTIES.

The revenue received under this heading amounted to £470.

#### WORK DONE FOR THE SCENERY PRESERVATION COMMISSIONERS.

Plans, reports, and recommendations were prepared and sent in of the proposed reserves in seventeen survey districts, scattered generally throughout this land district, and comprising an area of about 10,553 acres.

#### "THE MAORI LANDS ADMINISTRATION ACT, 1900," ETC.

Under the above heading this office has undertaken the preparation of plans of the northern portion of this district, including the Aotea Maori Land Board's areas, and balance of Ikiroa, and showing the various tenures under which these lands are now held, together with the boundaries of the North Island Main Trunk Railway area, &c. In addition, all leases and deeds of blocks acquired by the Native Land Purchase Department in this district have been prepared, as well as of such blocks as have been handed over to the Aotea Maori Land Council (now the Aotea Maori Land Board), and also the schemes of subdivisions of certain Native reserves in the Upper Wanganui district.

#### SAND-DUNES AND DRIFTING SAND.

These dunes in this district consist of a narrow strip along the sea-coast between Paekakariki and the Patea River, varying in width from a few chains to three or four miles, although at Rangitikei River it extends to six miles, and comprise roughly an area of about 91,000 acres. Full and comprehensive reports and plans in illustration thereof have been furnished, together with proposals and recommendations for dealing therewith, and I am now endeavouring to arrange with some settlers to carry out the planting of experimental areas on a small scale.

#### ROYAL COMMISSION ON LAND-ADMINISTRATION.

This Commission, which was set up by direction of Parliament to inquire into the working of the Land Acts throughout the colony, came into this district in June last. By request of the Chairman I attended at Stratford, and accompanied the southern division of the Commission through this and the adjoining district of Hawke's Bay, visiting and sitting at Taihape, Feilding, Palmerston North, Pahiatua, Masterton, and Wellington. In addition to these I attended the Commission when sitting at Dannevirke, Waipukurau, and Hastings, in Hawke's Bay. It is satisfactory to be able to state that, although some complaints were made in regard to the past administration of the Land Board, the Commission, after a full investigation of each case, and after hearing both sides, decided that in no case had the Board failed in its duty to the settlers, or exceeded its powers, but that if certain amendments were made in the Land Act, with a view to removing some anomalies and disabilities under which settlers who hold under particular tenures now labour, most of their complaints would probably cease.