

Township of Runanga.—Tenantry, 196. This township is situated four miles from Greymouth, and is held under lease in perpetuity. Twenty-eight sections have been forfeited during the year, principally for non-compliance with the regulations, one surrendered, and sixteen new sections have been taken up. The streets are now all cleared of forest, and formation and metalling are steadily proceeding, access having been given to every house. All the Government and municipal reserves have been felled, and the township presents a thriving and prosperous appearance. The class of house erected is very superior to the ordinary miner's residence; thirty-six have been built during the year, and there are now ninety-five houses on the township, of which ten are shops. The residents are mostly employees of the adjacent State coal-mine, but a large number live in Greymouth, and others again are on the mining reserve adjoining the workings. On account of this, the population of the township is smaller than it otherwise would be. For details of the expenditure on streets, &c., see Mr. District Surveyor Wilson's report, appended to my survey report (published as part of C.-1A).

Pastoral Leaseholds.—All the Westland runs, with the exception of a few mountain-top leaseholds, occupy the valleys and intervening spurs and terraced lands between the sea-coast and the main range. They are almost wholly covered with forest, and are chiefly occupied by herds of cattle, which feed on the undergrowth. On the intervening scrub and tussock patches fair numbers of sheep and horses are profitably reared. Several areas of mountain pastures are also grazed by sheep during the summer months. There are 193 lessees, many of whom only occupy small areas, and who use the bush feed chiefly for rearing the stock, which they fatten on turnips and grass. These holders are all thriving, their herds and flocks are increasing, and their outlook is very encouraging.

Miscellaneous.—Tenantry, 243. These holders lease small reserves, &c., all over the district, under temporary titles, which preclude heavy improvements. Still, such leaseholds are very much appreciated by many men, who conjoin land-cultivation with lumbering, gold-mining, coal-mining, and other attendant pursuits. Of the 243 noted above, forty-six are lessees of coal, oil, and flax areas.

GENERAL.

The Commissioner's and Rangers' reports show that the Crown tenants, on the whole, have fairly well complied with the conditions of their several leases; the arrears of rental are now very low, the value of improvements effected on each holding is considerably in excess of the amount required by the regulations, and altogether the position, in every respect, as between Crown and tenants is very satisfactory.

The district as a whole is progressing satisfactorily, and despite a cold spring the crops are much better than last year. The country generally is looking well, owing to the fine season; good "burns" were obtained, and fine root-crops ensued; grass is abundant, and plenty of sound hay has been stacked, consequently winter feed is secure. In the southern districts, which may be classed as purely grazing-lands, clearing and grassing has been vigorously carried on, and the outturn of fat stock has been unprecedented in number and quality.

A keen demand for land still holds, and it is confidently expected that the whole of the new blocks which are now being prepared for the market will be at once occupied.

REBATES OF RENTAL.

Rebates amounting to £70 16s. 7d. were made during the year to 265 Crown tenants.

ARREARS OF RENTAL.

These amount to £215 11s. 4d. owing by fifty-seven tenants, being a considerable reduction on the figures of last year. There are no arrears on the lands-for-settlement estates at Poerua and Kokatahi, or on the Kokatahi Village Settlement lands.

FORFEITURES AND SURRENDERS.

There were thirty-nine forfeitures during the year. Thirty of these were small sections in the Runanga Township, the lessees of which had taken up the sections with the idea of settling there, but afterwards found the locality unsuitable. One pastoral run was forfeited on account of non-payment of rent. Eight miscellaneous leases were cancelled, the land in nearly all cases being reselected on permanent tenures. Surrenders of fifteen leases were accepted. Three of these were leases in perpetuity, on which the lessees were unable to comply with conditions. Of the eight miscellaneous leases, three were flax leases, covering areas on which there was not sufficient flax to warrant the erection of mills; three were mineral leases, under the jurisdiction of the Warden; the other two being surrendered for the purpose of acquiring the areas on more permanent tenures. Four pastoral licenses were surrendered, two being on account of losses in stock, and the others on account of resumption of large areas for settlement.

SCENIC RESERVES.

The very important matter of setting apart certain lands as scenic and sanctuary reserves has been carefully attended to, and already seventeen areas, aggregating 19,808 acres, have been permanently gazetted for these purposes. It is proposed during the coming year that a large number of additional reserves be recommended for reservation, and thus complete, in the main, the conservation of all localities of scenic value in Westland.

FORESTS.

The timber industry still progresses, and an increased output has to be recorded. The mills in north Westland have been fully engaged, and are rapidly extending their operations into the back country, where large areas of fine milling forest await their enterprise. Many firms now possess locomotives, log-haulers, and the latest appliances for handling and milling. Others are adopting these better methods, and substituting iron rails for wooden tramways. The completion of the Ross Railway will enable an increased area of fine milling forest to be overtaken. Continuous inquiries are also made regarding the forests in South Westland, and ere long we hope to see sawmills established adjacent to the ports in various localities. These facts evidence a sound and profitable business, which, together with attendant industries, provides employment for fully a thousand hands, who