

INSPECTIONS AND RANGERS' REPORTS.

These comprise 1,046 inspections by the two Rangers in the east coast district, of an area of 223,780 acres, being a decrease of forty-eight in number, but an increase of 79,616 acres on last year's figures. The value of the improvements required to be effected was £28,104; the amount actually spent was £107,657, being £79,553 more than was required to be spent.

In the west coast district 481 inspections were made by the two Rangers, of an area of 855,577 acres, being a decrease of 253 in number and an increase of 707,591 acres in area from last year's figures. The amount required to be spent on improvements was £13,870, whereas £24,750 was expended, being £10,880 in excess of requirements.

The grand totals for both districts are as follows: Number of inspections made, 1527, over an area of 1,079,357 acres; being a decrease on last year's figures of 301 in number, and an increase of 787,208 acres in area. Improvements were required to be effected to the value of £41,974, and improvements actually made amounted to the value of £132,407: excess, £90,433. Out of the holdings inspected, only sixty-two selectors had not complied with requirements.

NOTE.—These figures include inspections in Te Ohu and Okahakura Blocks, also pastoral runs along coast. On these large areas no improvements were required.

REBATES OF RENTAL.

Rebate amounting to £2,902 2s. 6d. was granted to 2,372 selectors for prompt payment of rental, being an increase over last year's figures of £405 2s. 6d. in amount, and fifty-eight in number.

ARREARS OF RENTAL.

One hundred and two selectors were in arrear with two or more payments—£1,029 4s. 2d., of an area of 14,841 acres, being a decrease on last year's figures. The total arrears, including the current half-year's payment, are 331 in number, £3,163 7s. 8d. in amount, and 51,382 acres; being an increase over last year's figures.

SMALL GRAZING-RUNS.

Five leases expired by effluxion of time during the year, the annual rent being £120 1s. 8d., and the area 4,802 acres. All these runs have been offered to and accepted by the late lessees at new valuations, in terms of section 209 of "The Land Act, 1885."

FORFEITURES AND SURRENDERS.

During the year there were eight forfeitures of ordinary Crown leases, four under the Land for Settlements lease-in-perpetuity tenure, and three Native-township leases; being a total area of 2,307 acres; the annual rental being £179 8s. 4d. There were six surrenders accepted, aggregating 834 acres, and an annual rental of £78 12s. 10d.

RESERVES AND ENDOWMENTS.

9,712 acres 1 rood 34 perches were set aside during the year for the following purposes: Scenery, gravel, primary education, public buildings, &c.

CASH LANDS.

The area disposed of under this heading was 420 acres, comprising one section of 133 acres, under Part III of "The Land Act, 1892," and 113 lots of town land, aggregating 32 acres; fourteen suburban lots, of 39 acres, and five rural lots of 250 acres, were disposed of without option.

"THIRDS" AND "FOURTHS."

The allocation, under "The Land Act, 1892," of the proportion of rent from Crown lands taken up under the various systems of tenure has been made, and the due amounts have been passed to the credits of the respective local authorities, to whom during the twelve months £9,296 18s. 4d. has been paid for approved proposals for road-works, and under hypothecation certificates. Five hundred and seventy-four proposals for expenditure for "thirds" and "fourths" were received from the local bodies, and after careful examination 527 of these were submitted to the Land Board for favourable consideration, and were approved. Four certificates of hypothecation were also approved of by the Land Board and issued under the signature of the Chairman.

Acting under instructions, I had schedules prepared showing the "thirds" and "fourths" accrued to the 31st October, 1905, and for which the local authorities had failed to make any satisfactory proposals. In order that the provisions of section 121 of "The Public Works Act, 1905," might be carried out, the District Road Engineers, in conjunction with one of my officers, prepared proposals for the expenditure of these over-accrued "thirds" and "fourths." These proposals were approved by the Land Board, and forwarded for the Minister's action. However, the Hon. the Acting Minister for Public Works decided not to enforce the Act, but to give the local authorities the further opportunity of making proposals for these sums. I regret to add that only a few of the local bodies have availed themselves of this consideration.

On the 31st March, 1908, £14,579 10s. 9d. was in the Receiver of Land Revenue's Deposit Account to the credit of the County Councils and Road Boards. This amount includes the over-accrued "thirds" and "fourths." During the past year, as stated above, £9,296 18s. 4d. has been disbursed, which is an increase of above £3,000 on last year's payments.

ISSUE OF PROMISSORY NOTES FOR PAYMENT FOR GRASS-SEED.

Owing to the unusual continuance of dry weather during the summer months, disastrous bush and grass fires swept over practically the whole of this land district, and in consequence many settlers suffered more or less severely in the loss of buildings, furniture, fences, stock, &c.; and in accordance