

WESTLAND.

Poerua Settlement.—The Crown Lands Ranger reports that the tenants have had a very successful year as a whole. Very little more clearing has been done since last year, but some new sheds and additions to houses have been added. Eleven tenants are supplying the creamery with the milk of 229 cows. One has a separator, and churns his own butter, and disposes of it at Greymouth, whilst the remainder go in for grazing alone. There have been wonderful crops of oats and meadow hay, all well saved; the heads of the former being above the average, and quality first-class. All the barns are full, and on some farms it is in stack as well, so that there will be ample to keep the stock up to the standard during the winter months. On two of the farms the tenants are growing rye for winter feed, and I am informed this grain stands well when all grass has disappeared. The grass during the season has been phenomenal, and clover paddocks have been cut three times and made into hay. The potato-crop, with one or two exceptions, has been destroyed by blight. Carrots and mangels are good, but only small areas are planted. Turnips and cabbages have suffered from the ravages of the diamond-backed moth, the latter being practically destroyed altogether. The fruit-yield has been very good, especially apples, and the fine summer we have had is responsible for heavy crops of tomatoes, cucumbers, pumpkins, &c., all grown in the open. A good many porkers and vealers are sent down to Greymouth weekly, and are in great demand. Stock of all kinds are in good condition, and well able to stand the winter. Area, 3,230 acres 1 rood 6 perches; occupied sections, 19; population, 76. Horses, 73; cattle, 718; sheep, 634; pigs, 162. Area in grass, 1,643 acres; area in white and green crops, 50 acres. Requirements of Act, £1,943 18s. 1d.; improvements effected, £8,082 2s. Arrears of rental, nil.

Kokatahi Settlement.—The Ranger also reports that he made the usual yearly inspection of the above estate during the month of March, and found everything very satisfactory. There are four tenants supplying milk to the factory, the other three going in for grazing only. The main crop this year on the estate is hay, of which a splendid lot has been well saved. With one exception, the potato-patches have been ruined by the blight. Turnips are also a failure, owing to the ravages of the white-fly, but as the areas in crop were small this season, the loss is not so great. Grass has been very abundant and stock in good condition, consequently the milk-yield has been good—ninety-two cows supplying milk. Area, 1,894 acres 2 roods 20 perches; under grass, 1,620 acres. Cattle, 238; horses, 32; sheep, 1,811; pigs, 37. White and green crops, 70 acres. Population, 38. Required improvements, £267 16s. 7d.; improvements effected, £4,052. Arrears of rental, nil.

G. J. ROBERTS.
Commissioner of Crown Lands.

CANTERBURY.

LANDS OPENED DURING THE YEAR.

The lands available for selection at the beginning of the year comprised a total area of 16 acres 3 roods 13 perches, situated in the Annan Settlement (Waiiau Township), Kapuatohe Hamlet (near Belfast), Highbank Settlement, Rosewill Settlement (Cave Village), and Waikakahi Settlement (Morven Township), all open for selection under the lease-in-perpetuity system. In addition to these there were offered during the year one allotment of 1 rood 38 perches in the Cave Village under the lease-in-perpetuity system, and one surrendered allotment of 462 acres in the Kinloch Settlement under the renewable-lease system. The last-named section was immediately selected. The small allotments previously available for disposal under lease in perpetuity are now being reopened under the renewable-lease system.

LANDS TO BE OPENED.

The Government has taken steps to acquire under the Land for Settlements Act the Culverden Estate in the Amuri County, the property of the trustees of the late Sir J. C. Wilson. The estate comprises about 25,829 acres, situated immediately adjacent to the present terminus of the main north line of railway at Culverden. It will be opened for selection under the renewable-lease system on the 19th June, subdivided into twenty-nine allotments varying in size from about 228 to 2,892 acres. About 7,500 acres are hilly pastoral land ranging up to an altitude of 1,819 ft.; the remainder is flat land varying in quality from light shingly soil to deep agricultural land.

LAND TRANSACTIONS.

As no fresh settlements have been opened during the year, the new selections consisted of only six allotments, totalling 3 acres 2 roods 14 perches, under the lease-in-perpetuity system, and one allotment of 462 acres under renewable lease.

The total number of lessees under all tenures on the 31st March, 1908, was 1,236, occupying an area of 259,944 acres 2 roods 4 perches, and paying an annual rental of £77,228 6s. 6d.

PAYMENT OF RENTS.

The total amount of rents and other payments received on account of all land-for-settlements estates during the year was £70,607 4s. 2d., bringing the total receipts for the district since the inception of the system to £498,587 5s. 10d.

The arrears of rent owing on the 31st March, 1908, exclusive of current payments, amounted to £426 16s. 11d., owing by twenty-six lessees occupying a total area of 1,595 acres 3 roods 10 perches. These arrears are due by slightly over 2 per cent. of the total number of tenants under the system, and the amount owing is less than $\frac{3}{8}$ per cent. of the annual rent-roll.