

Streets and Slums.

Mr. Coates complained that the high rents caused the owners to subdivide to escape them, and so caused too minute subdivision, resulting ultimately in slums. The division is not due to a desire to escape the rent, but to get money by selling the goodwill of portions of the leaseholds. This proves that the rents are *too low*. If fair rents were paid there would not be this trucking in their leaseholds by the tenants. They could not subdivide and sell them for considerable sums, as many are doing. A word of warning is necessary about this business. Unless this subdividing is controlled by the borough, slums will be brought into existence. It is in the highest degree absurd to blame the Natives for this. The office gets nothing out of this cutting-up of sections, but if it objected to it there would be the usual howl by interested individuals about "official tyranny," &c. The borough should prevent it going too far. Too small sections, like too narrow streets, are open to grave objections.

Surveys.

Perhaps the most remarkable request of the tenants, as urged by Mr. Coates, is that the Natives should pay for the surveys for these subdivisions. Pay for surveys to allow their tenants to put money in their pockets by speculation with and mutilating their land! The number of small right-of-ways and miserable little plots created by the lessees in Greymouth will yet be a reproach to the town. Instead of the Trust benefiting by these, it may ultimately suffer in consequence of them. This demand is characteristic of the unreasonable attitude taken up by many of the lessees towards the owners.

Rentals.

The burden of Mr. Campbell's evidence and complaints was "the craving desire of the Trust for rents." His own personal trouble about which he spoke arises in this way: He is the lessee of part Section 302c, Block 16, containing 16·6 perches. The Government capital value of it is £2,400—improvements, £2,000; unimproved, £400. £2,000 improvements on 16·6 perches, the value of which is £400, shows that Mr. Campbell has not been discouraged to improve his leasehold. The office, as it was bound to do, asked 5 per cent. on this £400. He refused it, and on arbitration £15 was awarded.

Now, these repeated assertions about excessive rents are completely answered by this return showing the rentals for the last thirty-six years. They are of more importance than a crowd of interested witnesses, and at once dispose of this imaginary grievance:—

Annual Amounts collected from Greymouth from 1874 to 1909.—Thirty-six Years.

1874	...	3,697				
1875	...	3,049				
1876	...	3,463				
1877	...	3,461	Average for 6 years, 1874 to 1879, inclusive...	...	...	£ 3,517
1878	...	3,976				
1879	...	3,457				
1880	...	2,711				
1881	...	3,405				
1882	...	3,144				
1883	...	2,310				
1884	...	3,078	Average for 10 years, 1880 to 1889, inclusive	...	...	3,089
1885	...	3,206				
1886	...	2,988				
1887	...	3,328				
1888	...	3,362				
1889	...	3,363				
1890	...	3,459				
1891	...	3,385				
1892	...	3,228				
1893	...	2,852				
1894	...	3,632	Average for 10 years, 1890 to 1899, inclusive	...	...	3,479
1895	...	4,577				
1896	...	3,811				
1897	...	3,175				
1898	...	3,436				
1899	...	3,244				
1900	...	3,450				
1901	...	3,413				
1902	...	3,377				
1903	...	3,614				
1904	...	3,962	Average for 10 years, 1900 to 1909, inclusive	...	...	3,500
1905	...	3,581				
1906	...	3,060				
1907	...	3,764				
1908	...	3,515				
1909	...	3,264				

Average for thirty-six years, £3,383.