

one or two appeals is proof that when the Department faced the position the accuracy of its judgment in re-entering has been substantiated.

REBATES OF RENT.

There was an increase in the number of selectors who secured a rebate for prompt payment, which is an indication that money was circulating in this district, enabling the selectors to reap the benefits accruing from payment at the due date.

ARREARS OF RENTAL.

Another proof of the prosperity of the selectors is that the number in arrear this year has fallen to 259, as against 409 for the previous twelve months. The question of arrears was one which the Department had to face in a businesslike manner, obtaining on the one hand a compliance with the conditions of settlement, and at the same time exercising discretion, to avoid indiscriminate application of pressure, which would bear heavily upon the poorer settlers struggling to make homes in the backblocks.

CONVERSIONS OF TENURE (UNDER SECTIONS 192 AND 193 OF "THE LAND ACT, 1908").

There has been a total of twenty applications to convert to renewable lease. Of this number there is only one applicant under the lease-in-perpetuity system, one under the village-homestead system ("Land Act, 1885"), ten under Hauraki pastoral lease, and eight under mining district land occupation lease.

PURCHASE OF FREE-SIMPLE OF LEASE IN PERPETUITY (UNDER SECTION 177 OF "THE LAND ACT, 1908").

Thirty-three applications have been received since this section came into force. In the majority of cases where the valuations have been made there has been an increase in the value. In two cases this increased valuation was objected to by the lessees, and on the matter being referred to arbitrators, in accordance with the regulations, the objections were upheld.

"THIRDS," "FOURTHS," AND "HALVES."

There has been a considerable increase in the amount paid over under this heading by the Receiver of Land Revenue to local bodies. It is a feature of the proposals by the local bodies that quite the major part of the money received is devoted to maintenance of existing roads. The Land Board has, of course, no power to interfere with the expenditure, except to see that the proposals embrace the construction or maintenance of roads and bridges leading to or opening up the land from which the money accrues. Settlers frequently call upon the Land Board to bring local bodies to task for not expending the money in the proper places, whereas there is no penalty beyond that mentioned in clause 151 of the Act. It is a question for consideration whether the law should not be amended to provide that the local body shall every year supply a schedule showing the proposals as approved by the Land Board and the works as carried out.

CORRESPONDENCE.

There were 27,088 letters, 1,167 packets, and 1,662 telegrams received, and 38,847 letters, 10,321 packets, and 1,794 telegrams despatched, making a gross total of 80,879. The approximate number of new files started was 2,900.

RECEIVER OF LAND REVENUE.

In the Receiver's Office, 10,059 ordinary revenue receipts and 185 provisional title receipts were issued, covering a gross revenue of £124,476 4s. 8d., an increase on the previous year of nearly £15,000. In the Deposit Account 1,872 receipts, for a sum of £25,536 15s. 4d., and 1,004 cheques for refunds and disbursements, were issued. The sum of £15,056 10s. 1d. was paid into the Local Bodies' Account, the disbursements from that account amounting to £19,900 10s. 1d., by 141 payments to eighty-four local bodies.

CONCLUSION.

I have to acknowledge the assistance which has been rendered me by officers of this branch of the Department. Coming into the district as a stranger, I have found that loyal support was accorded me by those with whom I have been associated. In leaving to return to Wellington I shall carry away pleasant recollections of my brief stay in the Auckland District.

JOHN STRAUCHON,
Commissioner of Crown Lands.

HAWKE'S BAY.

LANDS OPEN FOR SALE OR SELECTION.

The area of Crown lands opened for sale or selection during the year was 62,982 acres. Of this area, 50,353 acres were offered for the first time, the balance, of 12,629 acres, being land previously offered. Included in the former may be mentioned the Piripiri and Waimarama Blocks.

There were 2,294 acres dealt with under "The Land for Settlements Act, 1908," the principal portion of which represents additional sections at Raumati, Hatuma, Lindsay, and Te Arai.