

Court in the matter of the application of section 177 of "The Land Act, 1908," to lands acquired under section 121 of "The Land Act, 1892," under which section practically the whole of the land in this district has been dealt with.

#### VILLAGE SETTLEMENTS.

There are only two village settlements in the district—viz., Kokatahi and Runanga. The former comprises 197 acres, of which 180 acres was in white and green crop this year. The Runanga Village Settlement is subdivided into areas sufficient for residence-sites only, and the sections are reserved for employees in the State coal-mine. There are forty-eight persons resident on these settlements, on which improvements have been effected to the value of £2,381.

#### MINING DISTRICTS LAND OCCUPATION LEASES.

There have been only eight new selections. This system is favoured by intending selectors only in cases where the area is less than the minimum allowed by regulations for the occupation of lands in mining districts. One lessee has exchanged his lease under this tenure to renewable lease.

#### PASTORAL RUNS.

Six runs the licenses of which were expiring were reoffered for lease by auction, and all disposed of at satisfactory prices. Areas totalling 10,921 acres were resumed for settlement from eleven runs. Right to improve areas totalling 2,180 acres, by clearing the bush and sowing grass, has been granted to ten licensees.

#### PASTORAL LANDS WITHIN MINING DISTRICTS.

New dealings total about same area as last year. Three leases have been exchanged to renewable lease. Good progress has been made by lessees.

#### MISCELLANEOUS LEASES.

Selections during the year comprise one lease of an area for brick-making purposes, and one for wood-pulping, the remainder being for grazing purposes, principally in localities where mining operations rendered the granting of better tenures inadvisable.

#### FORFEITURES AND SURRENDERS.

Five leases of sections in Runanga Township and six leases of rural land have been forfeited for non-compliance with conditions. In all cases every opportunity has been allowed to tenants to prove their *bona fides* before action has been taken, in the direction of forfeiting the leases, as the Land Board has always endeavoured to assist settlers rather than to deal with them harshly or too strictly in accordance with law. Surrenders of nineteen leases have been accepted, the area included in ten of these leases having been acquired by the former lessees on more permanent tenures.

#### ERADICATION OF NOXIOUS WEEDS.

A sum of £166 has been voted during the year for carrying out this most necessary work, and of this amount £120 has been expended chiefly in clearing ragwort and Californian thistle. Considerable difficulty has in some cases been experienced in compelling owners and lessees to clear their own lands, and protect them from this nuisance.

#### DEPARTMENTAL.

Fourteen ordinary and special meetings of the Land Board have been held, the items of business considered totalling 909. 3,200 letters were received and 4,842 despatched, and in addition to this upwards of 3,000 notices were issued. 1,697 sale-plans were also distributed to post-offices and intending applicants.

There were 856 leases and other documents prepared and issued. £12,150 was passed through the Accountant's books, 412 vouchers being passed. The Receiver of Land Revenue issued 2,132 ordinary receipts and passed £1,862 5s. 10d. through his Deposit Account, issuing 517 receipts for that amount.

Again I have much pleasure in recording my appreciation of the industry of the staff, and in acknowledging the willing assistance of each officer during the year.

G. J. ROBERTS,  
Commissioner of Crown Lands.

#### REPORT UPON PROTECTIVE WORKS TO PREVENT ENCROACHMENT OF RIVERS, AND UPON OTHER WORKS, WESTLAND LAND DISTRICT.

*Totara Flat.*—Expenditure, £259 15s. 11d., together with a pound-for-pound contribution from the settlers interested and the Grey County Council; spent on a substantial wall of wire crates and stones, in order to prevent the encroachment of the Grey River, which at times flooded the settlers' holdings, and threatened to wash away a considerable amount of land. An earth stop-bank was also erected. The works were under the direct supervision of the Grey County Engineer, and when I last visited the locality everything was standing well, and the river was gradually being forced into a new and safer channel.

*Poerua Settlement.*—Expenditure, £105 1s. 10d. A new channel, 45 chains in length, has been cut for the waters of Slatey Creek, which previously overflowed the sections. The channel has been fenced and willows planted, and if the settlers attend to it occasionally it is expected to prove a relief in flood-time. This work was carried out by two settlers on a subsidy basis.