

quality. All will be readily taken up. The Gisborne-Rotorua Railway is now formed through one end of this block, and will probably be open for traffic at an early date.

Tutamoe (7,570 acres): Undulating country, covered with mixed bush; formation generally papa and clay; good soil, suitable for sheep and cattle. Access for last few miles by pack-track only.

Kaweka, Pohui, and Kuripapangu (33,510 acres): High, broken, pastoral country; altitude from 2,000 ft. to 5,000 ft. above sea-level; soil light and stony on steeper portions; open and manuka country, with scrub and black-birch in gullies; well watered.

Ngatapa Survey District (4,600 acres): Mixed bush of tawa, kahikatea, &c., with birch on the top of ridges; well watered; soil light.

Hangaroa Run, No. 48 (3,147 acres): Hilly and undulating land of good quality, part still manuka fern, and bush, remainder in English grass; well watered.

Tuahu and Waikaremoana (6,000 acres): Mixed bush land with thick under-scrub; well watered; soil varies from inferior to fair; sandstone and papa formation.

Waitara (5,326 acres): Open fern and manuka land; portions in native and self-sown English grasses; light pumice soil.

INSPECTION AND PROGRESS OF SETTLEMENT.

The Crown Lands Ranger for the northern or Poverty Bay portion of the district reports that he inspected 395 holdings, with a total area of 262,789 acres. The value of improvements required to be effected was £169,330, while those effected were valued at £596,814. Of these selectors, only nine were in default for non-residence. Twenty-three special inspections were also made, covering an area of 13,620 acres; they comprised reports on timber, mineral, quarry reserves, and river accretions, &c. The area of bush felled on Crown lands taken up since 1908 was 2,471 acres, and on lands taken up in previous years 7,122 acres, making a total of 9,593 acres felled and grassed last season.

The Crown Lands Ranger for the southern portion of the district reports that he inspected and reported on 778 holdings, school-sites, &c., and, in addition, supervised and managed the construction of the Lindsay Settlement River protective works. He also attended to his duties as a member of the Ikaroa District Maori Land Board. The total area inspected was 245,879 acres, the area of bush felled 890 acres, the value of improvements required to be effected £116,601, value of improvements effected £267,112. On the holdings inspected, the tenants were depasturing 1,212 horses, 121,299 sheep, 7,609 cattle, and 967 pigs.

ARREARS OF RENT.

A comparison of the arrears of rent this year with the past one shows that last year's amount is exceeded by £1,395 9s. 3d. This increase is largely due to concessions granted by the Land Board to settlers by extending time for payment in the Raumati and Piripiri Settlements, owing to the delay in the construction of roads hampering them for a time, and preventing them sending their milk to the factories. All are in good order now, and no doubt the arrears will soon be paid off.

FORFEITURES AND SURRENDERS.

Exclusive of miscellaneous leases, only eight holdings were resumed and six surrendered during the year, and most of these were small holdings. The district appears to be fortunate in the class of settler it has obtained. Most of them seem to be good capable farmers.

TRANSFERS.

One hundred and forty transfers were approved by the Land Board and seventeen rejected. The Board exercised much care in dealing with applications for transfer, and examined all proposed transferees as to their financial positions, &c.

SMALL GRAZING-RUNS.

The term of the leases of twelve small grazing-runs expired during the year. The aggregate area of these was 39,003 acres, formerly let at annual rental of £294 16s. 7d. All were renewed for a further term of twenty-one years at greatly advanced rentals, which now total £2,801 10s. 6d. per annum.

LAND BOARD.

Twenty-three ordinary and special meetings of the Land Board were held during the year. The members paid special visits of inspection to Raumati and Ngatapa Settlements, and meetings were held in Gisborne, Wairoa, and Dannevirke to examine applicants for various settlements.

The second election by Crown tenants of a member of the Land Board was held on the 5th April, 1910, and Mr. Eustace Lane was again returned.

DEPARTMENTAL.

It is my pleasant duty to be able to report that I have found the officers in this district to be a most capable and energetic body of men, with whom it has been a pleasure to work, and I take this opportunity of thanking them for greatly lightening the difficulties I had to contend with in taking up my duties in a strange district.

The business transacted continues to increase from year to year. During the period under review 32,981 letters and 641 vouchers were dealt with, in addition to the usual notices and despatches of all kinds. The steady increase of settlement naturally brings increased office-work, but there is every reason to believe that the staff will be able to cope with it.

T. N. BRODRICK,
Commissioner of Crown Lands.