

## DISPOSAL OF REMAINING CROWN LANDS.

At the close of the year 1911-12 an area of 21,926 acres was in hand for offering for sale or selection during the current financial year. The following are brief descriptions of the blocks:—

Manawaangi Block (11,552 acres): Most part open country, partly in native and exotic grasses. The soil is variable; portions of the block show limestone outcrop, and other portions a clay subsoil resting on papa. Generally speaking, the block may be said to be well watered. The country is well adapted for mixed farming.

Te Whitiara Block (1,257 acres): The northern half is a natural clearing, the southern half being felled bush country which has been sown in English grass. All the sections are suitable for dairying, that industry having been successfully carried on in the locality for many years.

Tahoraite No. 1E Block (248 acres): Open grass land; soil fair to good.

Tutamoe (7,570 acres): Undulating country, covered with mixed bush: formation generally papa and clay; good soil; suitable for sheep and cattle.

Weber Survey District (294 acres): All in grass; soil fair to good.

Waiau Survey District (123 acres): Mostly hilly land with a few small easy-sloping terraces.

Te Arai Settlement (15 acres): Flat agricultural land of good quality.

Tongoio Settlement (867 acres): Comprised good limestone country, intersected by deep gullies carrying good water; all in grass.

## SMALL GRAZING-RUNS.

The leases of seven holdings, covering an area of 13,588 acres 3 roods 4 perches, at an annual rental of £142 7s. 2d., expired during the year, and were all renewed at advanced rentals, altogether amounting to £1,040 19s., as it was found that none of these areas were suitable for further subdivision.

## BUSH FELLED AND GRASSED.

The area of 14,959 acres of bush felled and grassed during the year—and this area only includes Crown lands inspected—illustrates the activity and progress of settlement, and also the great desire on the part of the settlers to bring land to a productive state, thereby enhancing the value of their holdings.

## INSPECTIONS, AND RANGERS' REPORTS.

The Crown Lands Ranger for the northern or Poverty Bay portion of the district made 269 inspections of leasehold sections held on different tenures, covering an area of 187,485 acres, and thirty-seven miscellaneous inspections and reports.

The improvements required under the Act amount to £136,006, while the improvements effected are valued at £341,716.

The area of bush felled on Crown lands during the year was 14,288 acres: of this area 3,804 acres was felled by the settlers on the Ngatapa Block, selected in February, 1911. With one exception all selectors have complied with all the improvement conditions.

As the season has been favourable the settlers have all had good burns, which means a great deal to the settler in the first year of his occupation. Speaking generally, it has been an exceptionally good year all round.

The Crown Lands Rangers for the southern portion of the district made inspections and reported on 674 holdings, and also supplied 124 special reports. The dairying industry is being carried on wherever the land is found to be at all suitable, and a good demand exists at the present time for both dairy and store cattle. Fruitgrowing operations are being greatly extended throughout the district, more especially in regard to apple-culture, and some good specimens were to be seen at the Hawke's Bay Show. A feature of the year has been the establishment of the Matamau cheese-factory, the plant consisting of a 14-horse-power boiler and 6½-horse-power engine, with two 850-gallon cheese-vats, and a steam hoist ejector for lifting the whey and capable of putting through 1,560 gallons per hour. Our settlers generally are prospering and contented.

## LAND REVENUE: REBATE OF RENT AND PAYMENT OF RENT.

The ordinary-revenue receipts, numbering 3,736, and twenty-six provisional-title receipts, were passed through the Receiver of Land Revenue's cash-book. In the deposit accounts £14,349 6s. 7d. was received. Twenty-five payments, amounting to £5,538 18s. 11d., were made from the Local Bodies Deposit Account.

The gross revenue received for the year was £116,614 13s. 3d. (a record for the district), an increase of £4,200 12s. 5d. over the previous year. The increase of revenue was principally made up of rents received from education endowments, which were handed over by the late School Commissioners on the 1st April, 1911, under the provisions of the Education Reserves Amendment Act, 1910. The lessees in arrear with their rents, exclusive of current half-year's rent, show an increase of twenty-four, and the total amount owing is £458 17s. 10d.; but this amount is comparatively small, representing less than ½ per cent. on the amount of annual rent payable. This is in a great measure due to the liberal rebate of 10 per cent. granted to the tenants for prompt payment. The amount granted under this heading was £8,158 8s. 10d., to 1,223 tenants, which is 7½ per cent. on the annual rent payable under all tenures.

## PURCHASE OF FEE-SIMPLE DURING THE YEAR.

In consequence of the high value of land of to-day only two tenants under lease-in-perpetuity tenure have taken the advantage of acquiring the freehold of their holdings, compared with twenty tenants under occupation with right of purchase who have taken the opportunity. In the latter case the land was valued over ten years ago.