

MEETINGS OF THE LAND BOARD.

Thirteen ordinary meetings and eleven special meetings of the Land Board were held during the year in connection with land-sales. The amount of business that came forward for consideration was so great that some of the meetings extended over two days.

OFFICE OF RECEIVER OF LAND REVENUE.

In the Receiver's office 7,810 ordinary revenue receipts and 168 provisional titles were issued, covering a gross revenue of £110,837 11s. 6d. In the Deposit Account 1,102 receipts for the sum of £22,615, and 183 cheques representing 1,426 disbursements, were issued. The sum of £6,624 1s. 11d. was paid into the Local Bodies' Deposit Account, and forty-one payments amounting to £4,739 4s. 8d. were made to twenty-three local bodies.

CLERICAL.

The number of letters, &c., received during the year was 19,462, and the number despatched was 38,368. These latter comprise letters, telegrams, circulars, plans, lithos, rent-notices, &c. The total correspondence thus dealt with was 57,830. There were 948 cheques covering 804 vouchers drawn on Imprest Account for a total of £10,042 13s. 1d. Other accounts dealt with covered 680 vouchers for £26,411 9s. 2d., and there were twelve requisitions for imprest-money, representing £10,£50, made during the year.

I have been requested by Mr. Mackenzie, the late Commissioner, to place on record his recognition of the loyal and able assistance rendered by the Chief Clerk and the officers working under him. This also applies to the other land districts of the Dominion that have been under Mr. Mackenzie's control.

G. WRIGHT,
Acting Commissioner of Crown Lands.

NELSON.

CONDITION AND PROGRESS OF SETTLEMENT.

The settlement of this district is proceeding in a most satisfactory manner, and as lands are not now opened until they are roaded and the actual surveys made, very few complaints are received with regard to the want of roads, and generally the settlers appear satisfied with their condition and prospects.

Owing to several large blocks of unsurveyed selections being let by contract, the survey of scattered applications in the Inangahua and Buller Counties by contract, and the increase of the survey staff, the arrears of surveys have now been reduced to reasonable limits. The large blocks of land opened during the last four or five years are gradually being selected, and it is proposed during the current year to have surveyed and open for selection several large blocks which have been made accessible by the expenditure of loans obtained on the security of the land.

The settlers in this district are a very good class, and in most cases are contented with their condition and future prospects.

The roading of the backblocks is being carried out in a very satisfactory manner under the Public Works Department and the local bodies, and a very large amount of roadwork has been executed during the past year. The completion of the railway-line from Nelson to Glenhope has given a great start to settlement in the Buller Valley and its tributaries, and, by the reduction of freights, will make a great difference to settlement. The line is being constructed another four or five miles to the confluence of the Hope and Buller Rivers, and the survey of the line to Owen River junction (another ten miles) is in progress; this will bring the line within 11½ miles of Murchison Township.

The Township of Murchison is increasing rapidly, being the centre of a large pastoral district, parts of which are well adapted for dairying. The butter-factory at Murchison has increased four-fold since its institution three years ago, and is the largest factor in the prosperity of the district.

The railway-line between Reefton and Inangahua is nearing completion, the rails being laid to the Landing, and the balance of four to five miles in course of construction. The line from Westport to Inangahua Junction is in progress, and some four or five miles from the Nine-mile Punt (six miles from Westport) are practically completed. The work on this section is exceptionally heavy, being all rock-cutting, and will take some years to complete.

LAND PROPOSED TO BE OPENED, 1912-13.

The following blocks of Crown lands are being surveyed, or intended to be cut up during the coming year, for settlement.

Howard Block (20,000 acres), of which 17,000 acres ordinary Crown lands will be opened on the optional system, and 3,000 acres national endowment on renewable lease only. This block is within ten miles of the present terminus of the railway at Glenhope, and will in a short time be reduced to six miles. The land is suitable for pastoral purposes, chiefly sheep-grazing, when cleared and grassed. The roads through the block are being constructed, and the survey is in progress.

Waimea Block (about 5,000 acres), within the national-endowment area, situated at the headwaters of the Miner and Serpentine Rivers, and about ten miles from the railway-line. Grants have