

some of the sections is taken into consideration. Most of the defaulters were in their first or second year of tenure; there are, as a rule, very few who allow themselves to be behind when the sixth year has passed. Of those who had not complied with the conditions of personal residence it may be said that in every instance the Land Board dealt with the lessees on the merits of their own particular circumstances, and many of them complied within a few months of notice of default. It should be noted that the inspections show 170 persons resident on their holdings where only 143 are by law required to reside. In addition to the ordinary inspections the Ranger was kept very busy with inspections of a special nature.

Probable Future of Crown Lands.—The Rawhitiroa Block, mentioned in my last report, was made a State forest, as proposed, thereby absorbing 32,000 acres of the land that had been opened for selection. There are at present 53,481 acres remaining open for selection, all second-class land scattered over various portions of the land district. There is no great demand for these, as they are mostly rough lands, and at present not opened up by roads. With regard to new lands to be offered during the coming year, the following is a short description:—

4,465 acres, Omona and Opaku Survey Districts, inland of Hawera; second-class land. 590 acres, Block II., Upper Waitara Survey District, on Uruti and Moki Roads; first-class land. 3,944 acres, Blocks VI. and VII., Pouatu Survey District, adjacent to Upper Whangamomona; second-class land. 4,682 acres, Blocks XII. and XIII., Mimi Survey District, and Blocks III. and IV., Upper Waitara Survey District. 5,000 acres, Blocks X., XI., and XIV., Upper Waitara Survey District, embracing the lands adjacent to and on both sides of the Waitara River. 11,361 acres, Block VIII., Upper Waitara, and Block V., Pouatu Survey Districts, lying between the upper waters of the Waitara River and the Confiscation-line. The principal outlet for the four latter blocks will be by way of Ohura, Moki, or Okoke Roads. 1,705 acres, Block II., Mahoe Survey District, near Whangamomona; second-class land. 10,000 acres, Blocks VII., VIII., and XI., Omona Survey District, comprising the Whenuakura Special Settlement; second-class land. 4,600 acres, Blocks XIII. and XIV., Mahoe, and Blocks I. and II., Taurakawa Survey Districts, Llewellyn Special Settlement; second-class land. 5,000 acres, Block II., Pouatu, and XIV., Waro, including the Moanatauri Special Settlement; probably some first-class but mostly second-class land—say, 51,347 acres in all. For the above-mentioned lands I anticipate a very fair demand, as inquiries already have been made as to probable date of sale.

In addition there will be the under-noted lands to be put in the market during the year: 8,400 acres, forfeited sections in various parts of the district; second-class land. 6,000 acres, Opaku and Omona Survey Districts, parts of Pukekino and Kaharoa Blocks; second-class land. 8,000 acres, Block VIII., Omona, and Block V., Taurakawa Survey Districts, comprising the Moeawatea Special Settlement; second-class land—say, 22,400 acres in all.

Office-work.—The letters dealt with, inwards and outwards, numbered 11,673, an increase of 1,113 over last year; notices to selectors and others, 1,980; applications for land, 452; reports to Advances to Settlers Office, 76; cheques drawn, 1,592; vouchers, 1,966; transfers, 99; receipts, 1,938, in duplicate; provisional titles, 120, in triplicate; cards to auditor, 244; calculations for sections to be notified open for selection, 344; local bodies' proposals for expenditure of "thirds" and "fourths," 20, covering £3,315 18s. 9d. The clerical work appears to be steadily increasing.

JOHN STRAUCHON,
Commissioner of Crown Lands.

WELLINGTON.

Lands offered and disposed of.—Including holdings forfeited and surrendered in previous years, the area opened for selection amounted to 23,881 acres, which, added to the lands already available for selection, made up a total of 122,967 acres. The area taken up on lease or sold during the year, exclusive of 11,920 acres under temporary licenses, was 41,386 acres. The total number of applications for land was 602, and those approved 274, excluding auction-sales, conversions of tenures, leases made freehold, &c. The transactions also covered the Te Matua and Ohaka Estates under the Land for Settlements Acts. To this system we must look to supplement our waning supply of Crown lands. The demand for holdings continues keen, especially under the improved-farm and village-homestead systems, for which unfortunately the remaining Crown lands are almost invariably unsuited.