

to take what they can get for their dairy-produce, and, the price of cattle being down, those depending on this class of stock have had rather a disappointing year. However, the country keeps on making steady progress, and those who stocked with sheep last year have done extremely well out of them. The number of sheep coming into the district this autumn shows a considerable increase.

“The settlers in the improved-farm settlements at Totoro, Mangapapa, and Nihoniho are making an effort to have dairy factories established in their midst, but the want of proper access is the great drawback. On the 19th April the first auction sale in the district is to take place, at Matiere. This will be of great assistance to settlers, as formerly a man wanting a few head of cattle very often had to go without, as it would not pay him to go away to the nearest auction sale for a few head.

“During the present year schools have been opened at Mangapapa and Kaeaeae, and an effort with the same object is being made at Aria, Tatu, Tokirima, and Turoto Road.

“A medical association has been formed at Ohura, and arrangements practically completed by which a doctor will shortly be resident in the district. This will be an immense benefit to settlers, as at present the nearest doctor is forty-odd miles away.

“This winter the Aria settlers will have the advantages of a telephone, the erection of which is almost complete.”

#### REBATES OF RENT.

During the year 753 tenants holding under lease-in-perpetuity and occupation-with-right-of-purchase conditions of the Land Acts were granted 10 per cent. rebate on their annual instalments, amounting to £891 17s. 8d., and twenty-two land-for settlements tenants received a rebate of 10 per cent., equal to £153 2s. 5d. These figures show an increase of 116 tenants who availed themselves of the privilege, and represent a very large proportion of the tenants entitled to obtain it.

#### ARREARS OF RENT.

Excluding the current instalment, the number in arrear was fifty-five, as compared with eighty-seven last year; the amount owing being £465, as against £1,273.

Taking the current instalment into consideration, the number of tenants was 229, against 251 last year; the amount owing being £1,923, as compared with £3,150. I have found it necessary to resort to the process of law in some cases, which I have every reason to believe will have a salutary effect.

#### FORFEITURES AND SURRENDERS.

There were twenty-three holdings under ordinary conditions resumed, some for breaches of the Land Acts and others at the request of the selector. There were also two holdings under the Land for Settlements Act—in the Spotswood Settlement—forfeited for non-payment of rent. Two holdings were voluntarily surrendered. The reasons for these forfeitures and surrenders are mainly the unfitness of the selector for back-block life and the want of good access by road. This latter is an ever-present difficulty in connection with the opening of new lands.

#### RESERVES, FORESTS, ETC.

The reserves set apart during the year comprised 1,110 acres for growth and preservation of timber, 760 acres for primary education, and small areas for public recreation, school, cemetery, and travelling stock. Five areas, totalling 75 acres and 16 perches, were set apart for scenic and historic reserves.

#### DISPOSAL OF REMAINING CROWN LANDS.

A block of about 15,000 acres of second-class land in the Ohura and Piopotea West Survey Districts is now being prepared for settlement, and will be ready for offering about July or August next. It will, I anticipate, prove to be fairly good grazing-country.

The surveys have recently been commenced of the undermentioned blocks: About 13,000 acres in the valley of the Mohakatino, on the south side, second-class land; about 13,000 acres in the Pouatu and Mahoe Survey Districts, between the Tangarakau and Heao Rivers, also second-class land; and about 7,500 acres in the Totoro Survey District, on the south bank of the Mokau River, some of which may be found to be first-class land. It may be possible to have some of these lands in the market during the next financial year, and I have every reason to believe all that is offered will be eagerly sought after, the demand for land being so great.

#### OFFICE-WORK.

The volume of clerical business attended to is about the same as last year, being made up as follows: Correspondence inwards and outwards, circulars, applications, parcels, &c., 20,075; cheques drawn for wages, &c., 854; vouchers dealt with, 771; transfers recorded, 176; receipts for rents, refunds, &c., 3,238; provisional titles issued, 105; cards furnished to the Auditor of Land Revenue, 254; total, 25,473.

In addition to the ordinary work arising out of the transactions for the year, there has been the preparation of titles consequent upon the completion of surveys of lands disposed of within the last two years under the “provisional area” system, together with the necessary corrections to the books of reference caused by amendment of areas

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