

Statutes Repeal and Expiring Laws Amendment and Continuance Act, 1920.—This Act repealed section 24 of the Land Laws Amendment Act, 1915, which enabled soldiers abroad to apply for land through duly authorized agents in New Zealand, and continued the operation until the 31st August, 1921, of sections 42, 43, and 44 of the Land Laws Amendment Act, 1914, which provide respectively for the exemption of lessees from restrictions with regard to cropping, postponement of rent payable under pastoral licenses, and postponement of rent payable under settlement small-grazing-run leases. The operation of sections 42 and 43 has been further continued until the 31st December, 1921, by the Statutes Repeal and Expiring Laws Continuance Act, 1921.

Te Aroha Crown Leases Act, 1920.—This Act makes provision whereby the licensees of residence and business sites in the Borough of Te Aroha can acquire the freehold of their holdings either for cash or deferred payment in the manner prescribed therein.

Rotorua Town Lands Act, 1920.—This Act confers on lessees of Crown lands in town and suburbs of Rotorua the right of acquiring the freehold of their holdings either for cash or on deferred payment in the manner therein prescribed.

Reserves and other Lands Disposal and Public Bodies Empowering Act, 1920.—This Act, which authorizes special dealings with reserves and other lands, and gives special powers to certain public bodies, &c., contains 129 clauses, relating in most cases to matters of purely local interest.

Imprest Supply Act, 1920, and Imprest Supply Act, 1920 (No. 2).—Section 5 of each of these Acts transferred sums of £500,000 from the Consolidated Fund or other account to the Discharged Soldiers Settlement Account.

Discharged Soldiers Settlement Loan Act, 1920.—This Act empowered the Minister of Finance to borrow money not exceeding £6,000,000, to be placed to the credit of the Discharged Soldiers Settlement Account.

Appropriation Act, 1920.—Section 31 authorizes the transfer from the Consolidated Fund to the Discharged Soldiers Settlement Account of moneys not exceeding in aggregate £1,000,000.

REGULATIONS.

During the year regulations were issued defining the procedure with respect to acquisition by the Crown of Native interests in lands held under lease in Native townships, and the purchase by the lessees of such lands from the Crown for cash or on deferred payment.

TAUPO TRAMWAY LANDS AND TIMBER COMMISSION.

The Taupo Totara Timber Company (Limited) had, in pursuance of powers they had obtained, constructed a tramway (or light railway) from the Government railway at Putaruru as far as Mokai (about eighteen miles north of Taupo), a distance of fifty miles. As representations had been made to the Government that it was advisable for the Government to purchase this railway, join it to the present Government railway system and extend it to Taupo, a Royal Commission, consisting of Messrs. H. J. H. Blow, I.S.O. (Chairman), F. W. Furkert (Engineer-in-Chief and Under-Secretary, Public Works Department), Herbert Buxton (Chief Traffic Manager, N.Z. Railways), and G. H. M. McClure (Commissioner of Crown Lands and Chief Surveyor, Wellington), was set up to inquire into all matters connected with the company's estates, &c., and to report whether the acquisition by the Crown of the company's railway would be in the best interests of the State; if not, whether the Crown should arrange with the company as to its future control of the railway, whether it should be continued beyond its present terminus at Mokai, whether the company's timber rights or other rights should be acquired by the Crown, and what action should be taken by the Government to develop in the best manner the Crown and Native land served by the said railway. The Commission duly met, inspected the lands and line in question, took evidence, and furnished a valuable report, which has been printed as Parliamentary Paper C.—13 of 1921. The report did not recommend the purchase by the Crown of the railway. The Commission was of opinion that Government regulation of charges on the railway should be maintained, and that the line should be extended by the company from Oruanui Siding to Oruanui Township. It did not think it would be in the public interest for the existing timber rights of the company to be acquired by the Crown at the prices likely to be asked for them at the present time. Other recommendations and suggestions were made and are now under consideration.

KAURI-GUM INDUSTRY COMMISSION.

On the 21st February, 1921, a Commission was appointed for the purpose of inquiring into and reporting upon various matters affecting the kauri-gum industry, the kauri-gum lands and their various products, and the question as to whether any special taxation by way of royalty or otherwise should be placed on kauri-gum products for the benefit of local bodies. The Commission consisted of Messrs. R. P. Greville, F.R.G.S., Commissioner of Crown Lands and Kauri-gum Superintendent (Chairman); R. Coates, of Matakoho; F. L. Gribbin, of Auckland; E. J. Niccol, of Hikuai; J. Nicholson, of Auckland; F. P. Worley, M.A., D.Sc., of Auckland; and M. H. Wynyard, of Auckland. Mr. J. R. MacCormick, of this Department, acted as Secretary.

In the course of its investigations the Commission took evidence at Auckland, at a large number of places extending from that city to the farthest north, at several places on Coromandel Peninsula, and inspected the most important gum-workings in the whole of the country traversed.