

NATIVE TOWNSHIPS.

Under the provisions of "The Native Townships Act, 1895," small blocks of Native land come under the jurisdiction of this Department for subdivision into townships in localities where the advancement of the district and the progress of the colony require the establishment of centres for business and public convenience.

The operations during the year comprised the setting apart of Te Puru Township (near Kawhia) in the Auckland District, but this has not yet been opened for selection. At present there are three townships in the Hawke's Bay District and four in Wellington, which have been offered to the public and partly selected. They comprise a total area of 976 acres available for leasing, of which 90 acres was taken up during the year by thirty-two tenants, making, with the area previously leased, a total of 621 acres held by 163 selectors, at an annual rental of £735. The largest township is that of Pipiriki, on the Wanganui River, a great tourist resort, where no less than forty-seven lessees occupy 236 acres, paying therefor an annual rental of £171. Next in size come those of Tokaanu, on the southern borders of Lake Taupo, where 104 acres are held by thirty tenants, and Te Araroa, near the East Cape, in the Poverty Bay District, 101 acres having been selected in the latter township by twenty-three holders.

ASSISTANCE TOWARDS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF MEDICAL MEN IN OUTLYING DISTRICTS.

The votes for medical assistance in outlying districts were distributed as follows: Whangaroa, £25; Cromarty (Preservation Inlet), £50; Waimarino, £75; Wanaka, £100; Catlin's, £150.

FORFEITURES AND SURRENDERS.

The following figures in classified form show the reasons for forfeiture or surrender:—

During the year 203 leases were forfeited and eighty-five leases surrendered.

The reasons for forfeiture were: Non-payment of rent, 105 leases; non-compliance with conditions, 30 leases; non-execution of leases, 8; cancelled, to allow settlers to obtain a permanent title under "The Midland Railway Authorised Area Land Settlement Act, 1900," 37 leases; various other reasons, 23 leases—203 leases. Of these, ninety-five sections were again opened for selection, and eighty-five sections have been selected.

The grounds for surrender were: Because rent was considered by tenant to be too high, and in order that a revaluation be made, 15 leases; as tenants could not comply with conditions, 3 leases; as tenants no longer required sections, 17 leases; poor or unsuitable land, 7 leases; insufficient money, 11 leases; too many rabbits, and excessive cost of fencing, 4 leases; illness, and other reasons, 28 leases: total, 85 leases. During the year twenty-seven of the sections were again offered, nineteen being selected.

It is satisfactory to note that the number of forfeitures and surrenders was 121 less than in the preceding year.

"THIRDS" AND "FOURTHS" FOR ROAD-MAKING.

Under the provisions of the Land Act a deduction is made of one-third of the price or value of the periodical payments and rental of all land disposed of under the deferred-payment and perpetual-lease systems in vogue under former land-laws, and of the occupation-with-right-of-purchase and lease-in-perpetuity systems under the present law, and one-fourth of the rent of a small grazing-run. These "thirds" and "fourths" are payable generally for a period of fifteen years from the commencement of the rent, and are handed over to the local authorities having the control of the roads, upon approval by the Land Board of proposals for their expenditure.

During the year the total payments made to the local bodies was £30,232 4s., and the character and particulars of the work authorised by the several Land Boards consisted of 1,446 chains of bush clearing, 2,107½ chains of scrub clearing, 8,404½ chains of road formation, £890 15s. 4d. in bridges, £810 6s. 6d. on culverts, and £13,552 14s. on maintenance.

The following table shows the amounts at credit of the local authorities in the several land districts at 31st March, 1902:—

	£	s.	d.
Auckland	5,333	4	5
Hawke's Bay	5,798	9	5
Taranaki	3,679	19	7
Wellington	19,798	15	6
Marlborough	299	1	0
Nelson	901	7	4
Westland	69	1	0
Canterbury	859	14	5
Otago	2,567	0	0
Southland	1,327	6	2
	£40,633	18	10

A circular has recently been issued drawing the attention of the several Commissioners of Crown Lands to the matter, with the object of obtaining information as to whether there is undue delay in the submission of proposals, and, if so, what course should be pursued for promptly expending the moneys accrued for the benefit of the settlers. The result of inquiries has been that in Auckland only one local authority ever delayed submitting proposals for twelve months. In Taranaki, in one instance, owing to a disagreement in October, 1900, between the Land Board and a local authority, none of the accrued "thirds" have been since expended, and the amount at credit of such local authority is now £1,478. In the other districts there are no undue