

ARREARS OF RENT.

Excluding current instalments payable in advance, the total amount of rent in arrear is £1,581.

The number of tenants whose rents were postponed is fourteen, and the amount involved £467. The amount of rent postponed to date and still unpaid is £1,394.

FORFEITURES, SURRENDERS, AND TRANSFERS.

The number of tenants whose leases were declared forfeited (exclusive of miscellaneous leases) amounted to twenty-two, with an area of 2,637 acres. There were seven leases surrendered, covering an area of 992 acres. The number of transfers brought before the Land Board was 227, of which seven were declined.

EDUCATION ENDOWMENT RESERVES.

There are 482 tenants in this district holding 231,828 acres, with an annual rental of £11,319. Of this number 427 tenants hold lands formerly administered by the School Commissioners of Otago. Practically all the reserves are let; those that are not comprise some scattered areas of very indifferent quality.

CONCLUSION.

Owing to the numerous changes in the staff and to the fact that it was short-handed for a time, the officers have had a strenuous time during the past year, and I wish to express to them my hearty thanks for the willing and satisfactory manner in which they have performed their various duties.

SOUTHLAND.

(G. H. M. McCURE, Commissioner of Crown Lands.)

The total number of tenants under all tenures at the close of the year was 3,032, and the total area held 2,173,368 acres, while the annual rental amounted to £47,200. This last amount is some £1,800 more than the figures at the close of the previous year. The gross revenue received for the year now under review was £65,809, showing an increase of £6,741 over last year's receipts.

LAND OPENED FOR SELECTION.

The total area of land opened under all tenures during the year was 46,947 acres, 2,000 acres of which were offered for the first time. Education-endowment land included in the above total amounts to 41,809 acres. This area consists for the most part of expired leases which were reoffered at auction.

LAND TO BE OPENED FOR SELECTION.

During the coming year I expect to place about 12,000 acres of new land in the market. The survey of part of this area is near completion, and I hope to have the balance surveyed in time to have the land offered this year. Most of the area is worked-out sawmill country situated in Aparima, Jacob's River, Oreti, Lillburn, Waimumu, Waikawa, and New River Districts. Apart from these figures a number of expiring education leases will be offered at auction.

ARREARS OF RENT.

The arrears at the close of the year amounted to £312 owing by fifteen tenants. This amount represents only a little more than one-half per cent. on the total annual rent payable, and may be taken as an assurance of the prosperity of the tenants generally.

FREEHOLD TITLES.

Compared with last year there was a slight falling-off in the number of freeholds acquired. The legislation of 1912 and 1913 offered further facilities to the tenants to acquire the fee-simple of their holdings, and under such legislation forty-two tenants converted their holdings to the freehold. The area thus acquired (including land for settlements) amounted to 8,501 acres, and the purchase-money paid to £12,595. Apart from these figures, nine lessees exchanged to deferred payment during the year and are purchasing their sections under that tenure.

TRANSFERS.

During the year 169 transfers were approved.

COAL LEASES.

Increased activity has been shown in the matter of applications for leases and licenses under the Coal-mines Act, and several leases have been granted during the year. The land comprised in such leases is mostly education-endowment land in the Wairio District. If railway communication be extended so that the lessees are able to comply with the output conditions of their leases, the result will mean that the education-endowment revenue will be considerably augmented.

I have also, as Commissioner, granted several leases over endowment land administered by the local High Schools Board.