

SESS. II.—1879.  
NEW ZEALAND.

# CROWN LANDS DEPARTMENT

(REPORT UPON THE, FOR THE YEAR ENDING 30th JUNE, 1879).

*Presented to both Houses of the General Assembly by Command of His Excellency.*

The SECRETARY for CROWN LANDS to the Hon. the MINISTER of LANDS.

SIR,— General Crown Lands Office, Wellington, 10th September, 1879.

I have the honor to forward the annual report on the Crown Lands Department for the year ended 30th June, 1879. In the Appendix will be found, in a tabular form, the statistics of the land disposed of since the foundation of the colony, and the transactions of the year; also reports from the Commissioners of Crown Lands on their respective districts.

I have, &c.,

JAMES MCKERROW,

The Hon. J. W. Thomson, Minister of Lands.

Secretary for Crown Lands.

## REPORT.

TABLE No. 1. brings up the summary of lands disposed of from the foundation of the colony to 30th June, 1879. A total area of 14,014,632 acres has been sold, and reserved for public purposes, the part sold realizing £11,210,412. There are 13,483,679 acres open for selection, and 20,828,885 acres withheld, being for the present, partly in pastoral leases and partly in temporary or forest reservations. The lands held by Natives, or sold by them to Europeans, were stated in last year's report at 16,500,000 acres. Of this area, 258,191 acres were gazetted during the year as Crown lands, 222,591 acres being added to the Auckland Land District, and 35,600 acres to the Land District of Wellington.

### *Land sold and disposed of during the Year.*

Table No. 2 shows sales of—

	A.	R.	P.	Purchases.		
Town lands ... ..	404	3	7	to 1,138	Cash Received.	Scrip.
Suburban ... ..	2,585	0	37	„ 191	£745,827 13 5.	£19,864 6 4.
Rural ... ..	386,673	0	19	„ 3,243		

As in former years, the sales and receipts from the open grassy districts of the southern land districts greatly preponderate over the other districts, in which the Crown lands are mostly forest-clad: Canterbury alone represents, for the year, nearly three-fourths of the sales and receipts for the whole colony. The sales in this district were nearly all in the six months ended 31st December, 1878. For 1879 the sales have been very low, and they cannot be expected ever again to rival the returns of the last two or three years, as comparatively little of the land remaining in the hands of the Crown in this district can be deemed agricultural. It is, from its hilly nature and high altitude, mostly pastoral, and will not sell readily on immediate payment at £2 an acre. The same remarks apply to Southland, where the land is also open for free selection at £2 an acre.

In Otago the land sales are restricted to the hundreds, or to such runs or parts of runs as may have been withheld from lease. The land now offered, and remaining for offer, is generally more pastoral than agricultural, and does not go off readily at £2 an acre by free selection. It can, however, after survey and declaration into a hundred, be offered for sale by auction at an upset price of £1 per acre. Under this system most of the land sales for the year have been made.

In the other land districts, viz., Auckland, Hawke's Bay, Taranaki, and Wellington, in the North Island; and Nelson, Marlborough, and Westland, in the Middle Island, the Crown lands are mostly under forest, and cannot be so readily or profitably occupied as open grass lands, and are not so much in demand. The aggregate area sold and receipts for these seven districts do