

to cultivate a certain proportion as one of the conditions of holding the land. This principle is by no means new, and hitherto it has had its exemplification in the systems already alluded to. Up to date fully 10,000 persons have selected in all over a million acres. After deducting the area made freehold by fulfilment of conditions, and that forfeited, there remains—3,016 selectors on deferred payments, holding, on the 31st March last, as per Table 9, an area of about 456,861 acres, on which £220,634 had been paid, and a further sum of £603,668 will accrue in future instalments. Of these, 867 selectors, holding 140,909 acres, are in arrear in payment of instalments, £19,273 being very nearly £22 5s. each, or, stated in time, about an average of nine months in arrear of the due dates when the sum stated should have been paid. The law requires prompt payment of instalments every six months. Some of the Land Boards have hitherto assumed a discretion in not pushing settlers for payment under certain circumstances. This clemency has undoubtedly been carried too far in those cases where selectors have been allowed to fall behind two and three years with their payments.

The capitalization clauses of "The Land Act 1877 Amendment Act, 1882," by affording a means of relief to settlers, have done pretty well away with any reasonable excuse for not paying. Under this system any selector who has fulfilled the conditions of his license for the first three years may have the future remaining seven years' instalments treated as an annuity, and its present cash value computed, which may be at once paid and the land thereby become freehold; or, the settler may elect to pay 5 per cent. interest on that sum—the principal—with the right to pay it off in sums of £10 and upwards each half-year, until the debt is extinguished. But, instead of having to complete this operation within the original ten years from the date of the license, the Land Act of 1882 has given four years of grace; so that there is eleven years for payment of principal and interest, or, in all, fourteen years from date of license before final payment of principal need be made. A practical example will show what a boon this mode of payment is to a settler struggling through the first few years of getting his farm in order. A B has 190 acres, for which he agreed to pay £712 10s., in twenty half-yearly instalments. At the end of the first three years, having resided on the land and fulfilled the other prescribed conditions of cultivation and improvement, and paid £213 15s., in six instalments, he may capitalize the remaining fourteen half-yearly instalments, viz., £498 15s.; this would be £412 7s. 2d., which he can either pay at once and obtain the freehold, or pay yearly £20 12s. 4d., being interest at 5 per cent. on that sum. The annual amount of instalments on deferred payment is £71 5s., so that by capitalization the annual burden is lessened by £50 12s. 8d., and time given (eleven years) for the settler to establish himself before he needs pay the principal sum of £412 7s. 2d. Up to the 31st March last the Act had been in force six months, during which time ninety-nine settlers, holding 17,779 acres, availed themselves of the capitalization, as per Table 10; and more applications for the same purpose have been made since. Settlers in arrear who either cannot or will not avail themselves of these relief provisions should not be allowed to remain in possession, as it is hopeless to suppose that they could continue to occupy the land with advantage either to themselves or the public if unable to comply with terms which the Legislature had made so easy.

PASTORAL DEFERRED PAYMENTS.

This method of disposal of the Crown lands is included under the previous heading of settlement conditions. But, as more land has been offered and purchased under this system during the last few months than what all previous transactions amount to, it will be worth while giving some particulars. The law allows of classified pastoral land being sold by public auction, in sections not exceeding 5,000 acres each, at an upset price of not less than £1 per acre. No purchaser is allowed to acquire more than the above area; he must reside on the land for the first six years; but no improvement or other condition is required of him, except, of course, of paying every six months one-thirtieth of the price of the land, the payments extending over fifteen years from the date of purchase, with the option, however, of completing the transaction at the end of ten years by paying in one sum the then remaining five years' instalments. While nothing but hill-land has been offered on pastoral deferred payment, care has been taken so to subdivide the country classified for that purpose as to secure as far as possible good homestead sites in the several sections. As yet land on this system has only been offered in the Auckland, Canterbury, and Otago Land Districts. On the 7th December, 1882, at Gisborne, in the Auckland Land District, five sections, comprising 5,589 acres, were offered, when three sections, containing 3,205 acres, were sold at the rate of £1 4s. per acre. In Canterbury Land District on the 24th April, 1883, at Christchurch, seventeen sections, containing 34,496 acres, were offered at an average upset of £1 8s. 2d. per acre; fourteen sections, containing 30,224 acres, were sold for £57,802, or an average of £1 18s. 3d. per acre. In Otago, on the 28th February, 1883, at Dunedin, thirty-six sections, containing 76,760 acres, were offered for sale, when twenty-eight sections, containing 62,716 acres, were sold for £103,678, or £1 13s. 1d. per acre. But, as the Land Board thought fit to challenge the trustworthiness of the declarations of ten persons, whose purchases amount to an area of 25,194 acres, and a sum of £40,259, the licenses to occupy have been refused. One of the purchasers has sought the aid of the law-courts to compel the Board to issue a license to him. As the matter is now before the Supreme Court for decision it would be unseemly to offer any remarks on the subject at present. The Board has since granted licenses to two of the ten refused. Leaving eight purchasers without licenses, who have been omitted from the following enumeration, there will, therefore, be up to date eighty-two holders of 151,710 acres on pastoral deferred payments in the colony, distributed as follows:—

	No. of Holders.	Acres.	Average Price per Acre.	Average Annual Instalments Payable for 15 Years.
Auckland ...	5	5,425	£1 4s. 5d.	1s. 7½d.
Canterbury ...	14	30,224	£1 18s. 3d.	2s. 6½d.
Otago ...	63	116,061	£1 9s. 0d.	1s. 11d.)
				Per Acre.