

petual leases made freehold, which realised £5,245, as against £1,000 estimated. The other items, with one exception, are in excess of the estimates, but to so small an extent that they do not call for special mention.

Table S.—The arrears, as hitherto, consist in the main of payments due on the 1st January, 1893. There are in all 518 selectors in arrear, owing £3,500, as against 560 selectors, owing £4,000 last year.

Table T.—The area reserved during the year has very largely exceeded that of the previous year, being 3,659 acres 1 rood 20 perches, as against 206 acres. The area alienated by Act—18,068 acres 2 roods 24 perches—is also in excess of last year—17,063 acres. It has been the practice in this district to include all Native land granted, whether required by the Crown or not; but I am not sure whether all such come strictly within the term. The total area alienated during the year was 21,728 acres and 4 perches. It is to be hoped that the Land Board will continue to recommend the reservation of large areas of forest in different parts of the district, notably along the summit of the Matemateonga Range, towards Mount Humphries.

Table U.—The total number of selectors on the books is 1,308, as against 1,171 last year. Apart from farm-homestead associations, there were only sixty-nine new selectors, as against 116 who acquired freeholds, or a falling-off in number of forty-seven.

Table W.—The balance of the university reserve, inland from Patea, was subdivided into eleven sections, comprising 7,222 acres, and were offered by auction on thirty years' lease in October, at an upset rent of 6d. per acre. The competition was very spirited, the prices realised ranging from 8d. to 3s. 2d. per acre, bringing in an annual rental of £559 8s.

I append a summary of the Crown Lands Rangers' reports for the year, from which it will be noticed that there have been inspected 213 sections of deferred-payment lands of the first, second, fourth, and sixth years, comprising an area of 30,837 acres; thirty-four of the selectors are in partial default, and twelve total default, while sixty-three are non-resident. Of these, however, twenty-five have made double improvements in lieu of residence. Of perpetual-lease lands, 209 sections, comprising an area of 46,657 acres, were reported on. Forty-five of the selectors have made partial default, six are in total default; but it will be observed that these are in their first year; the difficulty of access will account for this. Ninety-one are absent from their holdings; this may be accounted for from the fact that a large proportion of the selectors are young men with small means, who have to seek work elsewhere to enable them to live during a portion of the year on their holdings; of these, thirty have made double improvements in lieu of residence. Of the two small grazing-runs inspected, the improvements were sufficient for the requirements, but one of the selectors was non-resident. A large number of special inspections for the purposes of transfer and completion of purchase were made, and the usual schedules of expenditure of "thirds," submitted by the local bodies, were reported on, &c.

Taking into consideration the circumstances of difficulty of access, want of means with many of the selectors, and the unusually wet season, it may fairly be said that the progress of the district is exceedingly satisfactory.

As to the probable future of Crown lands in this district, the area at present available for settlement is, in round numbers, 400,000 acres. Making deductions for reserves, roads, &c., this will be reduced to 360,000 acres, and, assuming that 60,000 acres will be taken up annually—which I think is a low estimate—in six years' time it will all have been disposed of. In addition to the above, there are the Taumatamahoe, Whitianga, and Maraekowhai Blocks, which, I believe, are being acquired by the Crown. These will add an area of about 200,000 acres, exclusive of roads and reserves. Some of the land—notably, the Wangamomona Valley—is of excellent quality.

As to the rate at which settlement will progress, I think it depends mainly upon the means at the disposal of the Government for pushing on the formation of roads. The unavoidable delays which occur from various causes in the expenditure of the loans raised upon the land is a hindrance to settlement to a certain extent.

I append a schedule of Crown lands available for settlement.

SIDNEY WEETMAN,
Commissioner of Crown Lands.

SUMMARY OF CROWN LANDS RANGERS' REPORTS, 1892-93.

Report.	Number of Sections.	Area.	Partial Default.	Total Default.	Absent.	Double Improvements in Lieu of Residence.
		Acres.				
First, deferred payment	33	6,494	5	2	10	3
Second, "	66	10,783	4	5	36	13
Fourth, "	54	6,320	11	5	3	6
Final, "	60	7,240	14	..	14	3
Total	213	30,837	34	12	63	25
First, perpetual lease	66	18,828	14	6	13	11
Second, "	60	15,730	12	..	54	12
Fourth, "	42	6,258	8	..	17	6
Final, "	41	5,841	11	..	7	1
Total	209	46,657	45	6	91	30
Small grazing-runs	2	3,854	..	..	1	..
Total deferred payment, perpetual lease, and small grazing-runs	424	81,348	79	18	155	55