

Revenue.—The total revenue for the year amounts to £23,858 4s. 5d., nearly half received on account of deferred payment and perpetual leases made freehold, on which there has been a particularly heavy run. The reason generally given is, to raise money on mortgage, to stock and further improve the land.

Arrears of Payments.—The arrears are slightly in excess of last year, but not formidable, the amount being £813 18s. 3d., owing by 101 tenants, which, with five exceptions, represent the payments due, in advance, for the current half-year. The total number of defaulters throughout the district on the 31st December was only six, owing £25 15s. 9d., which must be regarded as very satisfactory, and a sign of general prosperity throughout the settlements.

Improvement Conditions.—Inspections have been made of 351 holdings of all classes of tenure (other than pastoral licenses), comprising 231,430 acres, with the result that, whereas the amount of improvements required was of a value of £34,900, it was found that no less than one hundred and thirteen thousand four hundred and seventy-five pounds' worth was effected, about treble the amount required, and of an average of about 10s. an acre over the whole area.

Sixty-three selectors of deferred-payment and perpetual-lease lands are in arrears. The value of the improvements done is £4,100, instead of £6,900, as required by the conditions, but this deficiency is largely due to the insistence of double improvements where the residence conditions have not fully been carried out.

On the forty-eight small grazing-runs, of an area of 120,565 acres, improvements to a value of over £30,000 have been made, about twelve times the amount that could be insisted upon.

It is estimated that 15,000 acres have been felled during the year, and a very large extent of country laid down in grass. The settlers in some localities have been particularly unfortunate in their burns, for the season has been anything but favourable, and considerable loss has been sustained in consequence, and the utilisation of the land thrown back at the least a year.

As in last year's report a full and detailed account was given of all the Crown lands available for future disposal in this district, it will be unnecessary to again refer to it, further than to say the only alteration to be made will be a reduction on account of the 49,831 acres disposed of this year, and no fresh blocks have been proclaimed waste lands of the Crown. There are at present 40,000 acres, chiefly second-class land, open for selection in different parts of the district, about two-thirds as "unsurveyed."

Several other blocks will be offered during the coming year, but all second-class land, as of first-class Crown land suitable for small holdings there is practically none left; and, until some of the excellent land now in the hands of the Natives lying unimproved and unproductive is acquired, or land obtained by other means, I regret to say that there will be little opening for intending settlers with small means.

THOMAS HUMPHRIES,
Commissioner of Crown Lands.

WELLINGTON.

Table A is a summary of the total area disposed of during the year—viz., 156,296 acres 3 roods 32 perches, being 73,986 acres in excess of that of last year, but this is owing to the larger area—127,656 acres—taken up by farm homestead associations. Of the area selected, cash lands are very small in area, being only 1,787 acres and 7 perches, purchased by sixty-two persons, of whom fifty-six bought town or village sections, and only six purchased rural sections over 50 acres in extent, the average selections all over being just under 33 acres.

Table D, *Deferred-payment Lands*, shows that only 1,041 acres were selected on this system during the year, by three selectors, an average of 347 acres, as against 7,569 acres taken up last year by twenty-six selectors. This system was being rapidly superseded by the perpetual-lease system in this district, and has, of course, now ceased entirely owing to the coming into operation, on the 1st November last, of "The Land Act, 1892." This accounts for the great falling-off in the number and area of selections during recent years. There are 200 selectors still on the books, holding an area of 42,477 acres 2 roods 25 perches, the yearly payments for which amount to £5,807 15s. 2d. Forty-nine persons completed their titles during the year, to an area of 9,170 acres 2 roods 19 perches. Only one selector's interest was forfeited during the year for non-compliance with the conditions of the Act.

Table E, *Perpetual Lease*.—Under this heading, 7,976 acres were leased by twenty-five people, as against 54,028 acres by 129 persons last year, the average selection being 319 acres. This large decrease is owing to the small area of land available for selection on this system during the first seven months of the year, and the coming into operation of "The Land Act, 1892," on the 1st November last. There are 763 selectors on the books, holding an area of 298,552 acres 3 roods 33 perches, the annual rental being £14,797 6s. 10d. There were thirty-eight titles acquired during the year, for an area of 10,305 acres 2 roods 27 perches, the capital value being £11,969 6s. 5d. There have been eleven forfeitures during the year, covering an area of 3,888 acres 2 roods, for non-compliance with the conditions of the Act.

Table F, *Lease in Perpetuity*.—This is one of the new systems introduced by the new Land Act, and during the five months it has been in operation there have been thirteen selections, of 5,578 acres, an average of 429 acres.

Table G, *Occupation with Right of Purchase*.—This is another new system brought in by the new Land Act, and there have been twenty-eight selections, of 10,730 acres, an average of 383 acres, or about double the number on the last-mentioned system, which probably has not yet been fully understood by the public.