

the number of those who signed the petition in favour of the acquisition of this land it was only natural to suppose that this would be the case. It has not, however, been taken up so speedily as was anticipated, and there is no doubt that one of the chief causes of this was that the people of the district were led to believe that a large estate in that and the adjacent district would be brought into the market, and this, considering that the land referred to is of more convenient access, militated, and still militates, against the taking-up of the Pomahaka sections. I have no doubt, however, that the remaining sections will be gradually disposed of. As far as I have been able to ascertain, the price at which the land was opened was considered somewhat high. It is possible, too, that had the limit of holding been 640 acres, as in the Cheviot Estate, instead of 320 acres, as required by the Land for Settlements Act, a much larger area would have been disposed of, as some settlers with families already holding somewhat less than 320 acres, who would otherwise have applied, were debarred from so doing. The feeling also existed that the areas of some of the rougher portions of the land were too small to be profitably occupied. It would, no doubt, have been better had these less valuable portions of the estate been cut up into areas of from 400 to 500 acres; and it would certainly be advisable to provide for such being done in the event of the further acquisition of similar lands in the future for settlement purposes.

In regard to the Teanaraki Village Settlement, which was opened for selection on the 7th February last, consisting of about 345 acres, there still remain thirteen allotments to be disposed of out of the thirty-one into which the block was subdivided; but there is every probability of these being taken up shortly, two having been disposed of since 31st March. It was believed, from the position of this land, that it would have been readily applied for by farm-labourers and other workmen in the district as suitable homesteads for themselves and families, but, apparently, from causes before referred to in this report, there has not been, for the time being, sufficient inducement for the immediate selection of this land.

Speaking generally as to the promotion of settlement by the acquisition and disposal of lands under the provisions of the Land for Settlements Act, there can be no doubt that the acquisition of such lands as the Pomahaka and Teanaraki Blocks must be of considerable advantage to the districts in which they are situated, as in neither of them had the Crown any land to dispose of. It supplies an undoubted want, both in the form of small areas as in the case of Teanaraki, and larger ones as at Pomahaka, affording an opportunity on the one hand for working-men to obtain desirable homes in the districts where work is obtainable, and, on the other, farms of suitable area of good land for small farming. There is evidence in the Rangers' reports in connection with the special returns before referred to that those who have taken up sections in the above settlements intend to comply with the regulations under which they have taken up the same, by cultivating and making their homes on the land.

In addition to the areas already open for selection as per Land Guide, there are likely to be available for disposal during the present year the following lands:—

1. For selection under Part III. of the Land Act, optional system, 40,000 acres, approximately, comprising 1,000 acres, parts of Runs 204 and 204A, in the Rock and Pillar and Upper Taieri Districts; 629 acres in Dunback and Waihemo Survey Districts; 1,000 acres of bush reserve in Block XV., Maungatua Survey District; 6,395 acres, being subdivisions of Runs 206A and 206F, in Kyeburn, Naseby, and Maniototo Survey Districts; 4,000 acres, subdivisions of Fork's Run, Block V., Lower Wanaka Survey District; 8,500 acres in Blocks V., VI., and VII., Catlin's Survey District; 3,800 acres in Blocks XII. and XIII., Rimu Survey District; 8,700 acres in Blocks I., VII., and VIII., Tautuku Survey District; and 6,000 acres in Blocks II., VIII., IX., and Parts of X. and XI., Woodland District. The greater portion of this land is of a somewhat rough description; that in the Maungatua District is rough and steep, but the soil is good, and it has been cleared of bush. The 1,000 acres, parts of Runs 204 and 204A, known as Hamilton's Runs, is the estimated area likely to be cut up for small settlements, its quality being of a fairly good agricultural and pastoral character. Runs 206A and 206F, known as part of the Kyeburn Run, is composed of fairly good agricultural and pastoral land, and will no doubt all be applied for. The land in the Catlin's, Rimu, Tautuku, and Woodland Districts is all bush-land, the quality of the soil, generally speaking, being good. The areas into which the whole of this settlement-land will be opened for application vary from about 100 to 300 acres, with a few areas of the rougher land up to 500 acres.

2. For disposal under Part IV., village homestead allotments, there are 148 acres, being subdivisions of Section 24, Block V., Maerewhenua District, into areas of from 10 to 12 acres, good agricultural land, about five miles from Duntroon Railway-station; and 50 acres in Block X., Glenkenich District, being subdivisions of Section 44 of the said block into areas of from 5 to 10 acres, in the centre of a large and first-class agricultural district. There may possibly be other small areas opened under this part of this Act, which have not yet been decided upon.

3. For disposal under Part V., small grazing-runs, the following will probably be the available areas: 31,000 acres of Runs 204 and 204A (Hamilton's), retained for settlement but not yet subdivided, mostly of a purely pastoral character, in the Rock and Pillar and Upper Taieri Survey Districts; 2,500 acres of Runs 206A and 206F (Kyeburn), good pastoral country, likely to be disposed of under this system on account of the auriferous nature of the land, in the Maniototo Survey District; 1,600 acres in the Hummock Survey District, of good pastoral land; and, in addition to these areas, about 37,700 acres in Beaumont, Blackstone, Budle, Kakanui, Kuriwao, Kyeburn, Maerewhenua, Tiger Hill, Waipori, and Warepa Survey Districts; making a gross total of about 72,000 acres. Of the latter area of 37,700 acres, 7,319 acres in Blackstone, Tiger Hill, and Waipori Districts have already been taken up since the 31st March, the balance being principally the surrendered small grazing-runs in the Kakanui, Kyeburn, and Maerewhenua Districts, subdivisions of Tokarahi Run, and the subdivisions of the Bellamy and Beaumont Runs, in the Beaumont Survey District. The whole of the land comprised in these areas is chiefly pastoral country, with here and there a few patches of agricultural land suitable for homesteads and for growing